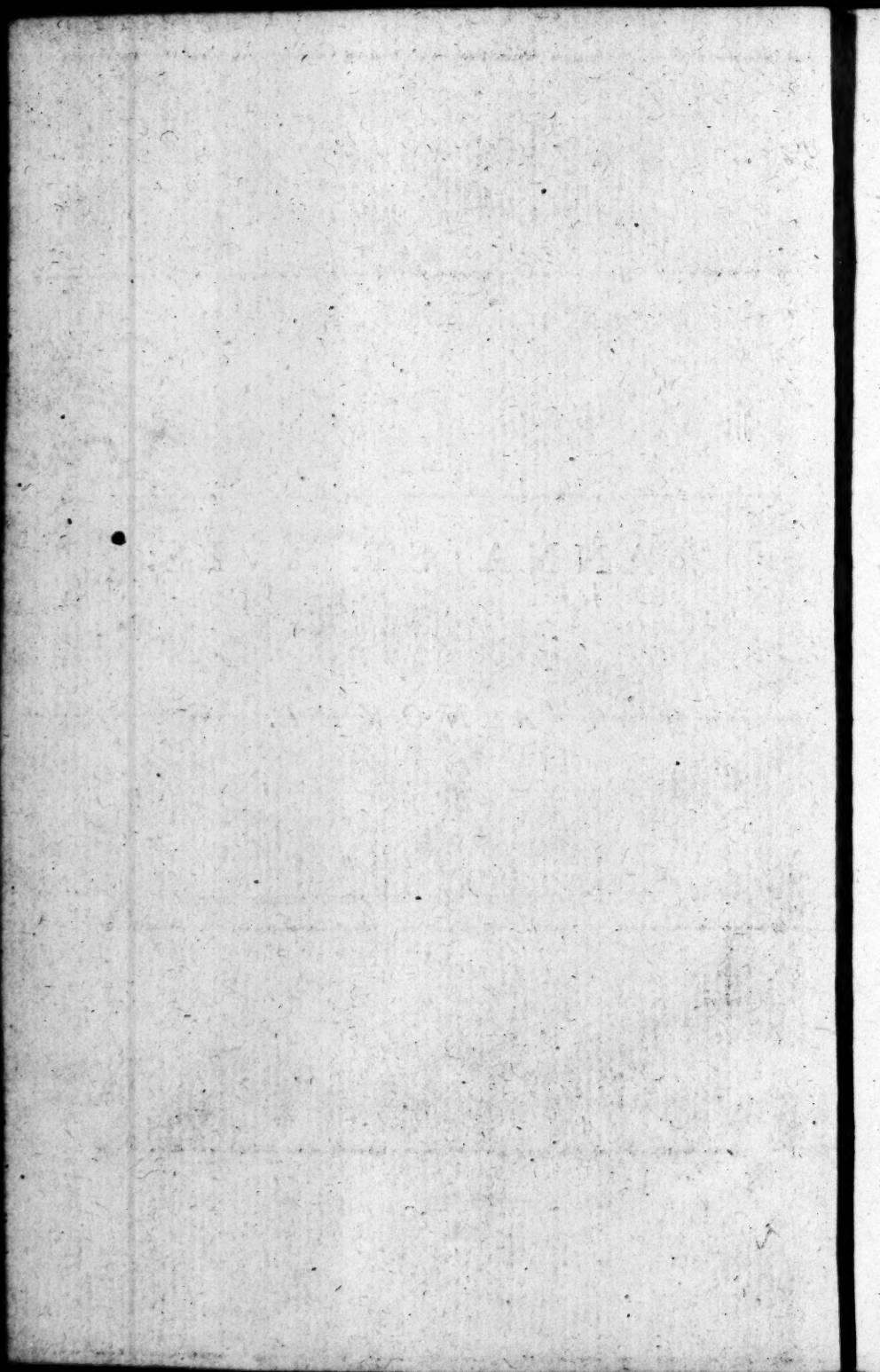


ANNA ST. IVES: *

A NOVEL.



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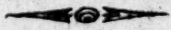
BY

THOMAS HOLCROFT.

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ANNA ST. IVES:

A NOVEL.

LETTER LXXXI.

COKE CLIFTON.

TO

GUY FAIRFAX.

London, Dover Street.

YES, yes, Fairfax! She takes the sure and resolute road to ruin, and travels it with unwearied ardour!—What think you she has done now?—An earthquake would have been more within my calculation!

VOL. IV.

B

—She

—She labours hard after the marvellous!
—She has been angling again in the muddy pool of paradox, and has hooked up a new dogma!—And what is it?—Why nothing less than an asseveration that the promise she made me is not binding!—Promises are nonentities: they mean nothing, stand for nothing, and nothing can claim.

So be it—It is a maxim, divine apostate, that will at least serve my turn as effectually as yours. To own the truth, I never thought promises made to capricious ladies stood for much; nor were my scruples at present likely to have been increased. If she, a woman, be simple enough to have faith in the word of man, 'tis her fault. Let her look to it!

This is not all: the doctrine is not of her own invention! Mr. Henley, the eternal Mr. Henley again appears upon the scene, from which he is scarcely ever a moment absent?—Were it possible I could relent, she is determined I shall not. But they are both down in my tablets,

blets, in large and indelible characters; on the black list; and there for a time at least they shall remain.

My plan, Fairfax, is formed; and I believe completely. When I was first acquainted with her, as you know, my meaning was honest and my heart sincere. I was a fool at least for a fortnight; for that was the shortest period before I began at all to waver. I was indeed deeply smitten! Nor is desire cooled: delay, opposition, and neglect have only changed its purpose. She soon indeed taught me to treat her in some manner like the rest of her sex, and to begin to plot. 'Tis well for me that I have a fertile brain: and it had been well for her could she have been contented with the conquest she had made, and have treated me with generosity equal to my deserts. But a hypocrite she has made me, and a hypocrite she shall find me; ay and a deep one.

She has herself given me my clue: she has laid open her whole heart. She

has the fatuity to mimic the perfect heroine ! Tell her but it is a duty, and with the Bramin wives she would lie down, calmly and resolutely, on the burning pile !

Well then I will tell her of a duty of which she little dreams ! Yes she shall grant every thing I wish as an act of duty ! I will convince her it is one ! I ! The pretty immaculate lamb must submit in this point to become my pupil ; and it shall go hard or I will prove as subtle a logician as herself

What say you, Fairfax ? Is not the project an excellent one ? Is it not worthy of the sapient Doctor Clifton ? Shall I lose reputation, think you, by carrying it into effect ?

I am already become a new man. My whole system is changed. She begins to praise me most unmercifully ; and, while my very heart is tickled with my success, the lengthened visage of inspired quaker when the spirit moved was never more demure ! I am too pleased, too proud of my own talents, not to persist.

Already

Already I am a convert to one of *her truths*. Do laugh, Fairfax! I have acknowledged that you and your footman are equal! Is it not ridiculous? However, I am convinced! Ay and convinced I will remain, till time shall be. She shall teach me a truth a day!—Yet, no—I must not learn too fast; it may be suspicious: though, I would be as speedy as I conveniently can in my progress.

The zeal of disputation burns within her; and, as I tell you, I am already one of her very good boys, because the pursuit of my own project makes me now as willing to listen and hunt after deductions, such as I want, as she is to teach and to supply me with those deductions. She starts at no proposition, however extravagant, if it do but appear to result from any one of her favourite systems, of which she has a good round number. Rather than relinquish the least of them, she would suppose the glorious sun a coal-pit; and his dazzling rays no better than volumes of black smoke, polished and

grown bright on their travels by attrition. She professes it to be the purpose of her life to free herself from all prejudices. But here she has the modesty to add the saving clause—"If it be practicable."

Could she, Fairfax, have a more convenient hypothesis? Do you not perceive its fecundity? And, the task being so very difficult, will it not be benevolent in me to lend her my assistance? What think you? Is it not possible to prove that marriage is a mere prejudice?

She shall find me willing to learn many or perhaps all of her doctrines; and in return I desire to teach her no more than one of mine. Can any thing be more reasonable, more generous? Nay, I will go further! I will not teach it her; she shall have all the honour of teaching it to me! Can man do more?

The most knotty and perplexed part of my plan was to find a contrivance to make the gardener's son an actor in the plot. The thing is difficult, but not impossible.

possible. I have various stratagems and schemes, in the choice of which I must be guided by circumstances. That which pleases me most is to invite him to sit in state, the umpire of our disquisitions.

I think I can depend upon myself, otherwise there would be danger in the project. But if I act my part perfectly, if I have but the resolution to listen coolly to their quiddities, sometimes to oppose, sometimes to recede, and always to own myself conquered on the points which suit me best, I believe both the gentleman and the lady will be sufficiently simple to suppose that in all this there will be nothing apocryphal. They will imagine the gilt statue to be pure gold. I shall be numbered among their elect! I shall rise from the alembic a saint of their own subliming! shall be assayed and stamped current at their mint!

Yet I must be cautious. I would put my hand in the fire ere undertake so apparently mad a scheme, with any other couple in Christendom. Considering how

very warm—Curfes bite and tingle on my tongue at the recollection!—Confidering I fay how very warm I know their inclinations towards each other to be, nothing but the proofs I have had could prompt me to commence an enterprize fo improbable. But the uncommonnefs of it is a main part of its merit; and I think I know the ground I have to travel fo well that I do not much fear I fhould lofe my road.

I am aware that the enemy I have moft to guard againft is myfelf. To pretend a belief in opinions I defpife, to fit with faturnine gravity and nod approbation when my fides are convulfed with laughter, to ape admiration at what reason condemns and fpurns, and to fmooth my features into fuavity while my heart is burfting with gall at the intercourfe they continually hold, of becks and fmiles, and approving kind epithets, to do all this is almoft too much for mortal man! But I have already made feveral effays on myfelf, and I find that the obftinate refolution which an infatiable

tiable thirst of ample retribution inspires is not to be shaken, and renders me equal even to this task.

I am well aware however what dangerous quicksands the passions are; and that a good pilot is never sparing of soundings. I will therefore not only keep a rigorous watch upon myself, but take such measures as shall enable me to exclude or retain the grub-monger, as I shall think fit, during our conversations.

Thus you are likely soon to hear more of our metaphysics; nay, if you be but industrious, enough to enable you to set up for yourself, and become the apostle of Paris. I know no place where if you have but a morsel of the marvellous to detail, you will find hearers better disposed to gape and swallow.

C. CLIFTON.

LETTER LXXXII.

ANNA WENBOURNE ST. IVES

TO

LOUISA CLIFTON.

London, Grosvenor-Street.

A FORTNIGHT has almost elapsed since I last wrote to my Louisa, till my heart begins to cry shame at the delay.— Could I plead no other excuse than the trifling occupations of a trifling world I must sign my own condemnation; but your brother has afforded me better employment. Our frequent conversations on
many

many of the best and most dignified of moral enquiries, his acute remarks and objections, and the difficult problems he has occasionally given me to solve, have left me in no danger of being idle.

Oh, Louisa, how exquisite is the pleasure I feel, to see him thus determined, thus incessant in his pursuit! A change so fortunate and so sudden astonishes while it delights!—May it continue!—May it increase!—May?—Vain unworthy wish!—It must—The mind having once seized on the clue of truth can neither quit its hold nor become stationary; it is obliged to advance. And when its powers are equal to those of Coke Clifton, ought we to wonder at its bold and rapid flights?

Still the conquests he daily makes over his own feelings cannot but surprise. His struggles are evident, but they are effectual. He even resolutely casts off the strong prejudices he had conceived against Frank Henley, invites him to aid us in our researches, and appeals to him to explain and decide.

“Let us if we wish to weed out error be sincere in our efforts, and have no remorse for our prejudices.”

This is his own language, Louisa! Oh that I could fully communicate the pleasure this change of character gives me to my friend. Yes, the restraint which too frequent contradiction lays him under will soon wear off, and how great will then be the enthusiasm with which he will defend and promulgate truth!

Nor is it less delightful to observe the satisfaction which this reform sometimes gives to Frank Henley. At others indeed he owns he is disturbed by doubt: but he owns it with feelings of regret, and is eager to prove himself unjust.

Yet respecting me his thoughts never vary—Alas! Louisa, I still “am his by right.” His tongue is silent, but his looks and manner are sufficiently audible. I surely have been guilty of the error I so much dreaded; my cause was strong, but my arguments were feeble; I have prolonged the warfare of the passions which I attempted

attempted to eradicate ; or rather have left on his mind a deep sense of injustice committed by me— ! The thought is intolerable !—Excruciating !

But oh with what equanimity, with what fortitude does he endure his imagined wrongs ! Pure, most pure must that passion be which at once possesses the strength of his and his forbearance ! There are indeed but few Frank Henleys !

Surely, Louisa, I may do him justice ?— Surely to esteem the virtuous cannot merit the imputation of guilt ?—Who can praise him as he deserves ? And can that which is right in others be wrong in me ?—Yet such are the mistakes to which we are subject, I scarcely can speak or even think of him without suspecting myself of committing some culpable impropriety !

Pardon, Louisa, these wanderings of the mind ! They are marauders which uniform vigilance alone can repel.— They are ever in arms, and I obliged to be very alert. But it is petty warfare, and cannot shake the dominion of truth.

My

My feelings have led me from the topic I intended for the chief subject of this letter.

The course of our enquiries has several times forced us upon that great question, "the progress of mind toward perfection, and the different order of things which must inevitably be the result." Yesterday this theme again occurred. Frank was present; and his imagination, warm with the sublimity of his subject, drew a bold and splendid picture of the felicity of that state of society when personal property no longer shall exist, when the whole torrent of mind shall unite in enquiry after the beautiful and the true, when it shall no longer be diverted by those insignificant pursuits to which the absurd follies that originate in our false wants give birth, when individual selfishness shall be unknown, and when all shall labour for the good of all!

A state so distant from present manners and opinions, and apparently so impossible, naturally gave rise to objections, and your brother

brother put many shrewd and pertinent questions, which would have silenced a mind less informed and less comprehensive than that of our instructor.

At last a difficulty arose which to me wore a very serious form ; and as what was said left a strong impression on my memory, I will relate that part of the conversation. Observe, Louisa, that Clifton and Frank were the chief speakers. Your brother began.

I confess, sir, you have removed many apparently unconquerable difficulties: but I have a further objection which I think unanswerable.

What is it?

Neither man nor woman in such a state can have any thing peculiar: the whole must be for the use and benefit of the whole?

As generally as practice will admit: and how very general that may be, imperfect as its constitution was, Sparta remained during five hundred years a proof.

Then

Then how will it be possible, when society shall be the general possessor, for any man to say—*This is my servant?*

He cannot: there will be no servants.

Well but—*This is my child?*

Neither can he do that: they will be the children of the state.

Indeed!—And what say you to—*This is my wife?*—Can appropriation more than for the minute, the hour, or the day exist? Or, among so disinterested a people, can a man say even of the woman he loves—*She is mine?*

[We paused—I own, Louisa, I found myself at a loss; but Frank soon gave a very satisfactory reply.]

You have started a question of infinite importance, which perhaps I am not fully prepared to answer. I doubt whether in that better state of human society, to which I look forward with such ardent aspiration, the intercourse of the sexes will be altogether promiscuous and unrestrained; or whether they will admit of something that may be denominated marriage.

The

The former may perhaps be the truth : but it is at least certain that in the sense in which we understand marriage and the affirmation—*This is my wife*—neither the institution nor the claim can in such a state, or indeed in justice exist. Of all the regulations which were ever suggested to the mistaken tyranny of selfishness, none perhaps to this day have surpassed the despotism of those which undertake to bind not only body to body but soul to soul, to all futurity, in despite of every possible change which our vices and our virtues might effect, or however numerous the secret corporal or mental imperfections might prove which a more intimate acquaintance should bring to light !

Then you think that some stipulation or bargain between the sexes must take place in the most virtuous ages ?

In the most virtuous ages the word bargain, like the word promise, will be unintelligible—We cannot bargain to do what is wrong, nor can we, though there
should

should be no bargain, forbear to do what is right, without being unjust.

Whence it results, that marriage, as a civil institution, must ever be an evil?

Yes. It ought not to be a civil institution. It is the concern of the individuals who consent to this mutual association, and they ought not to be prevented from beginning, suspending, or terminating it as they please.

Clifton addressed himself to me—What say you to this doctrine, madam? Does it not shock, does it not terrify you?

As far as I have considered it, no. It appears to be founded on incontrovertible principles; and I ought not to be shocked that some of my prejudices are opposed, or at being reminded that men have not yet attained the true means of correcting their own vices.

Surely the consequences are alarming! The man who only studied the gratification of his desires would have a new wife each new day; and the unprotected fair would be

be abandoned to all the licentiousness of libertinism !

Frank again replied—Then you think the security of women would increase with their imagined increase of danger ; and that an unprincipled man, who even at present if he be known is avoided and despised, would then find a more ready welcome, because as you suppose he would have more opportunities to injure ?

I must own that the men fit to be trusted with so much power are in my opinion very few indeed.

You are imagining a society as perverse and vitiated as the present : I am supposing one wholly the contrary. I know too well that there are men who, because unjust laws and customs worthy of barbarians have condemned helpless women to infamy, for the loss of that which under better regulations and in ages of more wisdom has been and will again be guilt to keep, I know, sir, I say that the present world is infested by men, who make it the business and the glory of their lives

to —

to bring this infamy upon the very beings for whom they feign the deepest affection! —If ever patience can forsake me it will be at the recollection of these demons in the human form, who come tricked out in all the smiles of love, the protestations of loyalty, and the arts of hell, unrelentingly and causelessly to prey upon confiding innocence! Nothing but the malverse selfishness of man could give being or countenance to such a monster! Whatever is good, exquisite, or precious, we are individually taught to grasp at, and if possible to secure; but we have each a latent sense that this principle has rendered us a society of detestable misers, and therefore to rob each other seems almost like the sports of justice.

For which reason, sir, were I a father, I think I should shudder to hear you instructing my daughters in your doctrines.

I perceive you wholly misconceive me; and I very seriously request, pray observe, sir, I very seriously request you to remember

ber that I would not teach any man's daughters so mad a doctrine as to indulge in sensual appetites, or foster a licentious imagination. I am not the apostle of depravity. While men shall be mad, foolish, and dishonest enough to be vain of bad principles, women may be allowed to seek such protection as bad laws can afford—It is an eternal truth that the wisdom of man is superior to the strength of lions; but I would not therefore turn an infant into a lion's den.

I am glad to be undeceived. I thought it was scarcely possible you should mean what your words seemed to imply—At present I understood you; and I again confess my surprise to find so much consistency, and so many powerful arguments on a question in favour of which I thought nothing rational could be advanced. You have afforded me food for reflection, and I thank you. I shall not easily forget what has been said.

Tell

Tell me, my dear Louisa, are you not delighted with this dialogue ; and with the candour, the force of thinking, and what is still better the virtuous fears of your brother ? His mind revolted at the mischief which it seemed to forebode : he was happy at being undeceived. And, with respect to argument I doubt whether he forgot any one of the most apparently formidable objections to what is called the levelling system. But he was pleased to learn that this is only giving a good cause to a bad name. Such a system is infinitely more opposite to levelling than the present ; since the very essence of it is, that merit shall be the only claimant, and shall be certain of pre-eminence.

The satisfaction I feel, my friend, is beyond expression. To have my hopes revived and daily strengthened, after fearing they must all be relinquished, increases the pleasure. It is great and would be unmixed but for—— Well, well ! — Let
Clifton

Clifton but proceed and Frank will no longer say—"To the end of time."—! You know the rest, Louisa—All good be with you!

A. W. ST. IVES.

P. S. I thought I had forgotten something. When Frank had retired, your brother with delightful candour praised the great perspicuity as well as strength with which he argued. He added there was one circumstance in particular in his principles concerning marriage, although they had at first appeared very alarming, which was highly satisfactory: and this was the confidence they inspired. "Nothing, he said, gave his nature so much offence as the suspicions with which, at present, our sex view the men. About two years ago he had a partiality for a Neapolitan lady, and thought himself in love with her: but
" in

“ in this he was mistaken ; it was rather
“ inclination than passion. He knew not
“ at that time what it was to love.—
“ Neither this Neapolitan lady, though
“ beautiful and highly accomplished, nor
“ any other woman his feeling told him
“ could inspire pure affection, who was
“ incapable of confiding in herself ; and,
“ wanting this self-confidence, of confid-
“ ing in her lover. Suspicion originates
“ in a consciousness of self defect. Those
“ who cannot trust themselves cannot be
“ induced to trust others.”

Thus justly, Louisa, did he continue to reason. Nor could I forbear to apply the doctrine to myself : I have been too distrustful of him ; my conscience^a accused me, and I am resolved to remedy the fault. I have always held suspicion to be the vice of mean and feeble minds :—but it is less difficult to find rules by theory than to demonstrate them by practice.

I am

I am sorry, my dear Louisa, to hear that the infirmities of Mrs. Clifton increase. But these are evils for which we can at present find no remedy ; and to which we must therefore submit with patience and resignation.

LETTER LXXXIII.

COKE CLIFTON

TO

GUY FAIRFAX.

London, Dover-Street.

I WILL not suppose, Fairfax, you seek to compliment me, when you say you enjoy the exuberant heat of soul, the fire that pervades my epistles. I am glad you do. I shall not think the worse of your talents. Many a line have I written in all the burst of feeling, and not a few in all the blaze of wit, and have said to myself,
—Should

—Should he not understand me now?—
Why if he should not, dulness everlasting
be his portion!—But you take the sure
way to keep up my ardour. While I per-
ceive you continue to enjoy I shall con-
tinue to be communicative. A sympathatic
yawner I may be, but I do not believe I
am often the first to begin.

I knew not half my own merits. I act
my part to admiration. 'Tis true the
combining circumstances are all favour-
able. I must be a dunce indeed if in such
a school I should want chicanery.—
Our disputations have been continual;
nor have I ever failed to turn them on the
most convenient topics. But none of them
have equalled the last; managed as it was
with dexterity by me, and in the very
spirit I wished by my opponents. I speak
in the plural; for I took care to have them
both present. Several remarks which I
had heard from him assured me he would
second my plan; which was no less than
to prove—marriage a farce!—Would you
have believed, Fairfax, I should have had

the temerity to step upon a rock so slippery ; and to have requested this Archimago of Adam's journeymen [Adam you know being the world's head-gardener] to stay and lend me his support?—Yet thus audacious was I ; and courage as it ought has been crowned with success !

The thought was suggested by themselves ; and had you or I or any of us vile marriage haters been declaiming against the saffron god, and his eternal shackles, I doubt whether the best of us could have said any thing half so much to the purpose!—Is it not excellent?—

Then had you heard me preach, ay, me myself, against libertines and libertinism !

By the by, Don Cabbage-plant had the insolence to say two or three devilish severe things, dishonourable to the noble fraternity of us knights of the beb-chamber, which if I forget may woman never more have cause to remember me !

However I brought him to own,—I—
[Do laugh !] by my very great apprehen-
sions

sions of the effects of such a doctrine, that though marriage be a bad thing it is quite necessary, at present, for the defence of the weaker vessels and modest maidenhood. Ay and I applauded him for his honest candour ! I was glad I had misunderstood him ! Thanked him for all his profound information ! In short made him exactly what I wished, my tool ! And a high-tempered tool he is, by the aid of which I will shew myself a most notable workman!——

Not but the fellow's eye was upon me. I could observe him prying, endeavouring to search and probe me. But I came too well prepared. Instead of shrinking from the encounter, my brow contracted increasing indignation ; and my voice grew louder, as I stood forth the champion of chaste virginity and sanctimonious wedlock !—The scene in the very critical sense of the phrase, was high comedy !—

It was well, Fairfax, they went no farther than Paris : had either of them only reached Turin I had been half undone !—

And had they touched at Naples, Rome, Venice, or half a dozen other fair and flourishing cities, my character for a pretty behaved, demure, and virtuous gentleman had been irremediably ruined!

Upon my soul I cannot put it out of my head!—Had you heard me remonstrate what a horrid thing it would be to have marriage destroyed, and us honest fellows turned loose among the virgins, from whom we should catch and ravish each a new damsel every new day, and had you seen what a fine serious undertaker's face I put upon the business, your heart would have chuckled! To the day of your death it would never have been forgotten!

Perhaps you will wonder how I could draw such a doctrine from these spinners of hypothesis. I will tell you. I had heard them severally maintain—Try to guess what!—Not in seven years, though you were to do nothing else.—You I suppose like me have heard that liberty, security, and property are the three main pillars of political happiness?—Well then, these professors

professors maintain that individual property is a general evil!—What is more, they maintain it by such arguments as would puzzle college, council, or senate to refute. But that I am determined never to torment my brain about such quips and quillets, may I turn Turk if they would not have made a convert of me, and have persuaded me that an estate of ten thousand a year was a very intolerable thing!

My intention was to keep my countenance, but to laugh at them in my heart most incontinently. However, I soon found my side of the question was not so perfectly beyond all doubt, nor theirs quite so ridiculous as I had imagined.

'Tis true, I went predetermined to be convinced, and to take all they should tell me for gospel. I had a conclusion of my own to draw, and if I could but lead to that, I cared not how much I granted.

I know not whether this predisposition in me was of any advantage to their argument, though I think it was not; for, so ready was the solution to every difficulty,

I boldly ventured to state objections which I meant to have kept out of sight, lest I should myself overturn a system that suited my purpose. I perceived their eagerness, saw there was no danger that they should stop at trifles even if I should happen to throw them a bone to pick, and the readiness of each reply raised my curiosity. I fearlessly drew out my heavy artillery, which they with ease and safety as fearlessly dismounted. With a breath my strong holds are all puffed down, like so many houses of cards.

By this however my main business was done more effectually. We came to it by fair deduction. It was not abruptly introduced; it was major, minor, and consequent—All individual property is an evil—Marriage makes woman individual property—Therefore marriage is an evil—Could there be better logic?

As for his saving clause, that marriage in these times of prejudice and vice [I have the whole cant by rote, Fairfax.] is a necessary evil, leave me to do that away.

What!

What! Is she not a heroine? And can I not convince her that to act according to a bad system, when there is a better, were to descend to the ways of the vulgar? Can I not teach her how superior she is to the pretty misses who conform to such mistaken laws? Shall she want the courage and the generosity to set the first good example?—How often have I seen her eyes sparkle, her bosom heave, and her zeal break forth in virtuous resolutions to encounter any peril to obtain a worthy purpose! And can there be a more worthy?

Curse upon these qualms of conscience! Never before did I feel any thing so teasing, so tormenting! And, knowing what I know, remembering what I never can forget, the slights, injuries, and insults I have received, how I came to feel them now is to me wholly inconceivable. She is acting it is true with what she calls the best and purest of intentions toward me; she believes them to be such; she sometimes almost obliges me to believe them such myself. She tortures me, by half con-

c 5

straining

straining me to revere the virtues in favour of which she harangues so divinely. But shall I, like a poor uxorious lackadaisical driver, sit down satisfied with a divided heart?—I!—Has she not with her own lips, under her own hand, avowed and signed her contumelious guilt, her audacious preference of a rival!—A mean, a base, a vulgar rival!—And after this shall my projects suffer impediment from cheese-curd compassion? Shall the querulous voice of conscience arrest my avenging arm?—No, Fairfax!—It cannot be! Though my heart in its anger could not accuse her of a single crime beside, that alone, that damning preference would be all-sufficient!—The furies have no stings that equal this recollection!—

I have been throwing up my sashes, striding across my room, and construing ten lines of Seneca, and my pulse again begins to beat more temperately.

Let

Let us argue the point with this pert, unruly, marplot conscience of mine.

It was not at first without considerable reluctance and even pain that I began to plot. I almost abhorred reducing her to the level of the sex, not one of whom was ever yet her equal. But she used me ill, Fairfax. Yes, she used me ill; and you well know that want of resentment is want of courage. None but pitiful, contemptible, no-souled fellows forget insults, till ample vengeance have been taken. And shall conscience insolently pretend to contradict the decree?

Beside I could not but remember our old maxims, the Cyprian battles our jovial corps had fought, and the myrtle wreaths each wight had won. Should I, the leader the captain of the band, be the first to fly my colours? Was it not our favourite axiom that he who could declare, upon his honour, he had found a generous woman, who never had attempted once to deceive, trifle with, or play him trick, should still be acknowledged a companion of our
c 6 order,

order, even though he were to marry: but that all coquetry, all tergiversation, all wrongs, however slight, were unpardonable, and only one way to be redressed?—What answer can conscience give to that?

Your letters too are another stimulative. You detail the full, true and particular account of your amorous malefactions, and vaunt of petty obstacles, petty arts, and petty triumphs over Signoras and Madames who advance, challenge you to the field, and give battle purposely to be overcome. Their whole resistance is but to make you feel how great an Alexander you are, and that having vanquished them you are invincible! As you will certainly never meet with an Anna St. Ives, 'tis possible you may die in that opinion. But, I tell you, Fairfax, if you compare these practised Amazons to my heroine, you are in a most heterodox and damnable error, of which if you do not timely repent your soul will never find admission into the lover's Elysium.

Bear

Bear witness, however, to my honesty ; of women I allow her to be the most excellent, but still a woman, and not as I foolishly for a while supposed an absolute goddess. No, no. Madam can curvet and play her pranks, though of totally a different kind ; and being almost mortal at present, mere mortal must become in despite of conscience and its green sickness physiognomy.

At first I knew her not ; and unwilling to encounter logic in a gauze cap, I ceased to oppose her arguments, and thought to conciliate her by resolving to be of her creed. What could be more generous ? But no, forsooth ! The veil was too thin ! To pretend conviction when it was not felt, and to be satisfied with arguments before I had heard them, were all insufficient for her ! The prize could be gained only by him who could answer the enigmas of the sphinx ! I must enter the lists of cavil, and run a tilt at wrangling, ere the lady would bestow the meed
of

of conquest! Can conscience pretend to palliate conduct like this?

I then turned my thoughts to a new project, and endeavoured to overpower her by passion, by excess of ardour, by tenderness and importunity. They had a temporary effect, but I found them equally inefficacious. Nor was the art by which I had ofteneft been successful forgotten; though I confess that with her, from the beginning, it afforded me but little hope. I tried to familiarize her to freedoms.— I began with her hands; but she soon taught me that even her hands were sacred; they were not to be treated with familiarity, nor to be kissed and pressed like other hands! Let conscience if it can tell me why.

In fine, while to this insolent pedagogue she has been all honeyfuckle, sweet marjoram and heart's ease, to me she has been rue, wormwood and hellebore: him praising, me reproving: confiding in him, suspecting me: and, as the very summit
and

and crown of injury, proclaiming him the possessor, the master of her admiration, or in plain English of her heart.

And now, if after this impartial, this cool, this stoic examination Mr. Conscience should ever again be impertinent enough to open his lips, I am determined without the least ceremony to kick him out of doors.

When this famous conference of which I told you some half an hour ago was ended, and our president, our monarch of morals and mulberries had quitted his chair and withdrawn, I played an after-game of no small moment. After pronouncing a panegyric on the gentleman, as a legislator fit for truth and me, I read the lady a modest lecture on confidence, informed her of almost the exact quantity which I expected she would repose in me, and declaimed with eloquence and effect against those suspicious beauties who always regard us honest fellows as so many naughty goblins ; who, like the
Ethiopian

Ethiopian monster, voraciously devour every Virgin-Andromeda they meet.— But as I tell you I did it modestly. I kept on my guard, watched the moment to press forward or to retreat; and wielded my weapons with dexterity and success.

Poor girl! Is it not a pity that the very shield in which she confides, her perfect honesty and sincerity, should be destined to fall upon and overwhelm her? — Thus says counsellor Sentiment: and counsellor Sentiment is a great orator! — But what say I? Why I say, so have the Fates decreed, and therefore let the Fates look to it; 'tis no concern of mine; I am but their willing instrument.

These however are but the preliminaries, the preparations for the combat.— Ere long I shall be armed at all points, and what is better by her own fair hands, nor do I know how soon I may begin the attack. I have been casting about to send this superintendant of the cardinal virtues,
this

this captain of casuists and caterpillars out of the way ; and I think I have hit upon a tolerably bold and ingenious stratagem. I say bold because I perceive it is not without danger ; but I doubt I cannot devise a better. Without naming or appearing to mean myself, I have suggested to him, by inventing a tale of two friends of mine, what a noble and disinterested thing it would be for him to go down into the country and prevail on his father to remove all obstacles to our marriage——

How ! Say you. Is marriage your plan ? And if not is not that the way to ruin all ?

There is the danger I talked of ; but I do not think it great. The scoundrel gardener, I mean the father ; who is heartily despised by every body, is desirous that his son should marry Anna.— I know not whether I ever before mentioned this sublime effort of impudence.—The cunning rascal has so long been the
keeper.

keeper of Sir Arthur's purse, that it is supposed two thirds of the contents have glided into his own pocket. This is the reason of the delay on Sir Arthur's part, which at present I do not wish to shorten.—That this son of a grub-catcher, a Demosthenes though he be, should prevail on such a father, if he were to go down as I hope he will, is but little probable.—However, should the least prognostic of such a miracle appear, I have my remedy prepared. I will generously have a letter written to the senior overseer of the gravel walks, which if the character I have heard of him be not wholly false, shall revive all his hopes, and put an end to compliance.

In Italy, where amorous plotting is the national profession, I was not easily circumvented; and here, where another gunpowder treason would as soon be suspected as such gins and snares, at least by these very honest and sublime simpletons, I laugh at the supposition of being unearthed.

One

One word more. I think I observe in this knight of Gotham, this Sir Arthur, a more cordial kind of yearning toward our young prince of Babel land than formerly ; a sort of desire to be more intimate with him, of which by the by the youth is not very prompt to admit, and an effort to treat him with more respect himself, by way as it were of setting a good example to others. If my conjectures are right, the threats of the old muck-worm father have shaken the crazy nerves of the baronet ; and I half suspect there is something more of meaning at the bottom of this. Were it so, were he to attempt to discard me, it would indeed add another spur to the fury of revenge ! An affront so deep given by this poor being, this essence of insignificance, would make revenge itself, hot unsatiable revenge grow more hot, madden more, and thirst even after blood ! Patience foams at the supposition !

Thank

Thank heaven I hear the noisy postman
with his warning bell, which obliges me
in good time to conclude and cool these
fermenting juices of mine !

C. CLIFTON.

LETTER

LETTER LXXXIV.

FRANK HENLEY

TO

OLIVER TRENCHARD.

London, Grosvenor-Street.

MY mind, Oliver, is harrassed by a variety of doubts. I believe I shall soon be down at Wenbourne Hill, and of course shall then not fail to meet thee and visit thy most worthy father.

The reason of my journey originates in the doubts I mentioned. I am angry with myself for feeling alarms at one moment which appear impossibilities the next.

next. If my fears have any foundation, this Clifton is the deepest, the most hardened fiend-like hypocrite imagination can paint !—But it cannot be !—Surely it cannot !—I am guilty, heinously guilty for enduring such a thought !—So much folly and vice, combined with understanding and I may say genius so uncommon, is a supposition too extravagant, too injurious !

And yet it is strange, Oliver !—A conduct so suddenly altered, so totally opposite to old and inveterate habits, is scarcely reconcileable to the human character. But if dissimulation can be productive of this, is truth less powerful ?—No !—Truth is omnipotent. Yet who ever saw it hasty in its progress ? My only hope in this case is that the superiority of his mind has rendered him an exception to general rules.

But what could he propose by his hypocrisy ?—I cannot tell—His passions are violent and ungovernable ; and are or very lately

lately have been in full vigour—Again and again 'tis strange !

But what of this?—Why these fears ? —Can she be spotted, tinged by the stain of un sanctified desire ? —Never ! — The pure chastity of her soul is superior to attainment !—Yet—Who can say ? —Wilfully her mind can never err : but who can affirm that even she may not be deceived, and may not act erroneously from the most holy motives ?

Perhaps, Oliver, it is my own situation, my own desires, but half subdued, in which these doubts take birth. If so they are highly culpable.

Be it as it may, there is a duty visibly chalked out for me by circumstances.—Her present situation is surely a state of danger. To see them married would now give me delight. It would indeed be the delight of despair, of gloom almost approaching horror. But of that I must not think. My father is the cause of the present delay. I fear I cannot remove
this

this impediment, but it becomes me to try.

Though I had before conceived the design, this conduct has even been suggested to me by Clifton; and in a mode that proves he can be artful if he please. Yet does it not likewise prove him to be in earnest?

We have lately had several conversations, one in particular which, even while it seemed to place him in an amiable, sincere, and generous light, excited some of the very doubts and terrors of which I speak—If he be a hypocrite, he guards himself with a tenfold mask!—It cannot—No—It cannot be!—

I mean to speak to Sir Arthur concerning my journey, but not to inform him of its purport: it would have the face of insult to tell him I was going to be his advocate with his servant. Not to mention that he has lately treated me with increasing and indeed unusual kindness. If I do make an effort, however, it shall be

be a strenuous one ; though my hopes that it should be effectual are very few.— My decision is not yet final, but in my next thou wilt probably learn the result.

Farewell.

F. HENLEY.

P. S. My brain is so busied by its fears that I forgot to caution thee against a mistake into which it is probable this letter may lead. I mentioned, in one of my last, the project I had conceived of leaving England. Do not imagine I have abandoned a design on which the more I reflect the more I am intent. The great end of life is to benefit community. My mind in its present situation is too deeply affected freely and without incumbrance to exert itself—This is weakness !—But not the less true, Oliver. We are at present so imbued in prejudice, have drunken so deeply of the cup of error, that, after

having received taints so numerous and ingrained, to wish for perfect consistency in virtue I doubt were vain. Here or at the antipodes alike I should remember her: but I should not alike be so often tempted and deluded by false hopes: the current of thought would not so often meet with impediments, to arrest, divide, and turn it aside.

I have studied to divine in what land or among what people, whether savage or such as we call polished, the energies of mind might be most productive of good. But this is a discovery which I have yet to make. The reasons are so numerous on each side that I have formed a plan for a kind of double effort. I think of sailing for America, where I may aid the struggles of liberty, may freely publish all which the efforts of reason can teach me, and at the same time may form a society of savages, who seem in consequence of their very ignorance to have a less quantity of error, and therefore to be less liable to repel truth than those whose information

tion is more multifarious. A merchant, with whom by accident I became acquainted, and who is a man of no mean understanding, approves and has engaged to promote my plan. But of this if I come to Wenbourne Hill we will talk further. Once more, Oliver, adieu.

LETTER LXXXV.

COKE CLIFTON

TO

GUY FAIRFAX.

London, Dover Street.

COME to my aid, Fairfax; encourage me; feed my vanity; let hungry ambition banquet and allow me to be a hero, lest I relent: for, were I not or Lucifer or Coke Clifton, 'tis certain I should not persevere. By the host of heaven, Fairfax, but she is a divine creature! She steals upon the soul! A heart of rock could not resist her! Nor are they wiles, nor woman's lures, nor
blan-

blandishments of tricksey dimples, nor captivating smiles, with which she forms her adamantine fetters. No; 'tis the open soul of honesty; true, sincere, and unrelentingly just, to me, to herself, to all; 'tis that enchanting kindness, that heavenly suavity which never forsakes her; that equanimity of smiling yet obstinate fortitude; that hilarity of heart, that knows not gloom because it knows not evil; that inscrutable purity, which rests secure that all like itself are natively immaculate; that—Pshaw!—I can find no words, find you imagination therefore, and think not I will labour at impossibility. You have read of ancient vestals, of the virgins of Paradise, and of demi-deities that tune their golden harps on high?—Read again—And, having travelled with prophets and apostles to the heaven of heavens, descend and view her, and invent me language to describe her, if you can!

Curse on this Frank Henley! But for him my vengeance never would have been roused! Never would the fatal sentence

have passed my lips !—'Tis now irrevocable—Sure as the lofty walls of Troy were doomed by gods and destiny to smoke in ruins, so surely must the high-souled Anna fall—" Ill-starred wench !"—I, Fairfax, like other conquerors, cannot shut pity from my bosom. While I cry havoc, I could almost weep ; could look reluctant down on devastation which myself had made, and heave a sigh, and curse my proper prowess !—In love and war alike, such, Fairfax, is towering ambition. It must have victims : its reckless altars ask a full and large supply ; and when perchance a snowy lamb, spotless and pure, bedecked for sacrifice, in all the artless pomp of unsuspecting innocence is brought, bright burns the flame, the white clouds curl and mantle up to heaven, and there ambition proudly sits, and snuffs with glut of lusty delight the grateful odour.

I know your tricks, Fairfax ; you are one of the doubtful doctors ; you love to catch credulity upon your hook. I hear fat laughter gurgling in your throat, and
out

out bolts your threadbare simile—"Before the battle's won the Brentford hero sings *Te Deum*."—But don't be wasteful of the little wit you have. Do I not tell you it is decreed? When was I posted for a vapouring Hector? What but the recollections of my reiterated ravings, resolves, threats, and imprecations could keep me steady; assailed as I am by gentleness, benevolence, and saint-like charity?

By the agency of subtlety, hypocrisy, and fraud, I seek to rob her of what the world holds most precious. By candour, philanthropy, and a noble expansion of heart, she seeks to render me all that is superlatively great and good—Why did she not seek all this in a less offensive way? Why did she oblige me to become a disputant with a plebeian?—Disputant!—What do I say?—Worse!—Rival!—Devil!—Myriads of virtues could not atone the crime!—Yet in this deep guilt she perseveres and glories!—Can I forget?—Fear me not, nor rank my defeat among
D 4 things

things possible—Be patient and lend an ear.

To one sole object all my efforts point : her mind must be prepared, ay, so that when the question shall be put, chaste as that mind is, it scarcely shall receive a shock. Such is the continual tendency of my discourse. Her own open and undisguised manners are my guide. Not a principle she maintains but which, by my cunning questions and affected doubts pushed to an extreme, adds links to the chain in which I mean to lead her captive.

Perhaps, Fairfax, you will tell me this is the old artifice ; and that the minds of all women, who can be said to have any mind, must thus be inveigled to think lightly of the thing they are about to lose. Granted. And yet the difference is infinite. They are brought to think thus lightly of chastity : but, should you or any one of the gallant phalanx attempt to make Anna St. Ives so think, she would presently cry buzz to the dull blockhead, and give him his eternal dismissal.

Virtue

Virtue with her is a real existence, and as such must be adored. Her passions are her slaves; and in this and this alone the lovely tyrant is the advocate of despotism. She soon taught me that common arts would be treated by her, not merely with determined and irrevocable repulse, but with direct contempt. Some very feeble essays presently satisfied me. No encroachments of the touch, no glazing of the eye, no well feigned tremblings and lover's palpitations would for an instant be suffered by her. Take the following as a specimen of my mode of attack.

Among her variety of hypotheses she has one on mutability. " Little, she says, " as we know of matter and spirit, we " still know enough to perceive they are " both instantaneously, eternally, and infinitely changing. Of what the world " has been, through this series of never " beginning never ending mutation, she " can form nothing more than conjecture: " yet she cannot but think that the golden " age is a supposition treated at present

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“ with ridicule it does not deserve. By
“ the laws of necessity, mind, unless coun-
“ teracted by accidents beyond its control,
“ is continually progressive in improve-
“ ment. With some such accidents we
“ are tolerably well acquainted. Such
“ are those which have been destructive of
“ its progress, notwithstanding the high
“ attainments it had made in Greece and
“ Rome. The ruins still existing in Egypt
“ are wonderful proofs of what it once
“ was there ; though Egypt is at present
“ almost unequalled in ignorance and de-
“ pravity. Who then shall affirm changes
“ still more extraordinary have not hap-
“ pened ? She has no doubt, some revo-
“ lution in the planetary system excepted,
“ that men will attain a much higher de-
“ gree of innocence, length of life, hap-
“ piness and wisdom than have ever yet
“ been dreamed of, either by historian,
“ fabulist, or poet : for causes which for-
“ merly were equal to the effects then
“ produced are now rendered impotent
“ by the glorious art of printing ; which
“ spreads

“ spreads, preserves, and multiplies know-
“ ledge, in despite of ignorance, false zeal,
“ and despotism.”

Such was her discourse, and thus vast were her views! Nay, urged on by my questions, by the consequences which resulted from her own doctrines, and by the ardour of emanating benevolence, she astonished me by her sublime visions; for she proceeded to prove, from seemingly fair deduction, “ that men should finally
“ render themselves immortal; should be-
“ come scarcely liable to moral mistake;
“ should all act from principles previously
“ demonstrated, and therefore never con-
“ tend; should be one great family with-
“ out a ruler, because in no need of being
“ ruled; should be incapable of bodily
“ pain or passion; and should expend
“ their whole powers in tracing moral and
“ physical cause and effect; which, be-
“ ing infinite in their series, will afford
“ them infinite employment of the most
“ rational and delightful kind!”

Oh! How did the sweet enthusiast glow, ay and make me glow too, while, with a daring but consistent hand she sketched out this bold picture of illusion!

But, while the lovely zealot thus descanted on splendid and half incomprehensible themes, what did I? Why, when I found her at the proper pitch, when I saw benevolence and love of human kind beaming with most ardour in her eye, and pouring raptures from her lip, I then recalled her to her beloved golden age, her times of primitive simplicity; made her inform me what lovers then were, and what marriage; and what the bonds were which hearts so affectionate and minds so honest and pure demanded of each other.

What think you could her answers to all these questions be? What but such as I wished? Could lovers like these suspect each other? Could they basely do the wrong to ask for bond or pledge? Or, if they wanted the virtue to charm, could they still more basely ask rewards they did not merit? Could they, with the wretched
selfish

selfish jealousy of a modern marriage-maker, seek to cadaverate affection and to pervert each other into a utensil, a commodity, a thing appropriate to self, and liable with other lumber to be cast aside? No, Fairfax; she played fairly and deeply into my hand. She created exactly such a pair of lovers as I could have desired: for with respect to the truth and constancy with which she endowed them, if I cannot be the thing, I can wear the garb; ay, and it shall become me too, shall sit *dégagé* upon me, and be thought my native dress.

Think not that I am a mere listener: far the reverse. I throw in masterly touches, which, while they seem only to heighten her picture, produce the full effect by me intended. Thus, when she described the faith and truth and love of the innocents of her own creation, how did I declaim against the abuse to which such doctrine, though immutably true, was liable!

“Alas! madam,” said I, “had the
“unprincipled youths with which these
“times

“ times abound your powers of argument
“ with their own principles, how dreadful
“ would be the effect ! How many unsus-
“ pecting hearts would they betray !”

I am once more just returned from the palace of Alcina ! I broke off at the end of my last paragraph to attend my charmer ; and here again am I detesting myself for want of resolution ; and detesting myself still more for having made a resolution, for having undertaken that which I am so eternally tempted to renounce. Your sneer and your laugh are both ready—I know you, Fairfax—“ The gentleman is founding a retreat ! The enterprize is too difficult !”—No—I tell you no, no, no—But I am almost afraid it is too damnable !

I pretended to be exceedingly anxious concerning the delay, and afflicted at not hearing any thing more from Sir Arthur. If I did not do this, it might be a clue to lead her to suspect hypocrisy, considering
how

how very ardent I was at the commencement. And, to say the truth, I am weary enough of waiting; though it is not my wish to be relieved by any expedition of Sir Arthur's, who, as I hinted to you before, does not appear to be in the least hurry, and whose uncton for the gardener's son increascs.

But had you heard her console me! Had you seen her kindness! The tear glistening in her eye while she entreated me to consider delay as a fortunate event, which tended to permanent and ineffable happiness; had you I say beheld her soul, for it was both visible and audible, Fairfax, though you are the marauder of marriage land and the sworn foe of virginity, even you would have pardoned my tergiversation.

Did you never behold the sun burst forth from behind the riding clouds? The scene that was gloomy, dark and dismal, is suddenly illumined; what was obscure becomes conspicuous; the bleak hills smile, the black meadows assume a bright verdure;

ture; quaking shadows dare no longer stay, cold damps are dispelled, and in an instant all is visible, clear, and radiant! So vanish doubts when she begins to speak! Thus in her presence do the feelings glow; and thus is gloom banished from the soul, till all is genial warmth and harmony!

These being my feelings now, when I am escaped, when I am beyond the circle of her sorceries, think, Fairfax, be just and think how seductive, how dangerous an enemy I have to encounter—Listen and judge.

“ Oh! Clifton”—She speaks! Listen I say to her spells!—“ Oh! Clifton, daily
“ and hourly do I bless this happy accident, this delay! I think, with the heroic archbishop, I could have held my
“ right hand firmly till the flames had consumed it, could I but have brought to
“ pass what this blessed event has already
“ almost accomplished! To behold your
“ mind what it is, and to recollect what
“ it so lately was, is bliss unutterable! I
“ consider myself now as destined to be
“ yours :

“ yours : but whether I am or am not is
“ perhaps a thing of little moment. Let
“ self be forgotten, and all its petty inte-
“ rests ! What am I ? What can I be,
“ compared to what you may become ?
“ The patriot, the legislator, the states-
“ man, the reconciler of nations, the dis-
“ penser of truth, and the instructor of the
“ human race ; for to all these you are
“ equal. As for me, however ardent,
“ however great my good-will, I cannot
“ have the same opportunities. Beside I
“ must be just to myself and you, and it
“ delights me to declare I believe you
“ have a mind capable of conceptions
“ more vast than mine, of plans more
“ daring and systems more deep, and of
“ soaring beyond me. You have the
“ strong memory, the keen sensibility, and
“ the rapid imagination which form the
“ poet. It is **my** glory to repeat that your
“ various powers, when called forth, have
“ as variously astonished me. To bid you
“ persevere were now to wrong you, for I
“ think I dare affirm you cannot retreat.

“ You

“ You have at present seen too much,
“ thought too much, known too much
“ ever to forget. In private you will be
“ the honour of your family and the de-
“ light of your wife ; and in public the
“ boast of your country and the admiration
“ of the virtuous and the wise.”

I fell on my knee to the speaking deity !
She seemed delivering oracles ! My pas-
sions rose, my heart was full, her eulogium
made it loath and abhor its own deceit ;
the words—“ Madam, I am a villain !”—
bolted to my lips ; there they quivering
lingered in excruciating suspense, and at
last slunk back like cowards, half wishing
but wholly ashamed to do their office.

By the immortal powers, Fairfax, it
was past resisting ! Why should I not be
all she has described ? The hero, the le-
gislator, the great leader of this little
world ? Ay, why not ? She seemed to
prophecy. She has raised a flame in me
which, if encouraged, might fertilize or
desolate kingdoms. -Body of Cæsar, I
know not what to say !

’Tis

'Tis true she has treated me ill; nay vilely. It cannot be denied. But ill treatment itself, from her, is superior to all the maukish kindness which folly and caprice endeavour to lavish. Fairfax, would you did but behold her! My heart was never so assailed before!

My resolution is shaken, I own, but it is not obliterated. No; I will think again. My very soul is repugnant to the supposition of leaving its envenomed tumours unassuaged, and its angered stabs unavenged. Yet, if healed they could be, she surely possesses that healing art—
Once more I will think again.

What you tell me in the Postscript to your last concerning Count Caduke [Consult your dictionary; or to save yourself trouble read Count Crazy, alias Beaunoir] is wholly unintelligible to me. But as you say the name of the gardener's son was several times mentioned by him, I shall take an immediate opportunity of interrogating the 'squire of shrubs, who I am
certain

certain from principle will, when asked, tell me all he knows.

Apropos of poetry. The panegyric of this sylph of the fun-beams gave me an impulse which I could not resist, and the following was the offspring of my head-long and impetuous muse ; for such the huffey is whenever the fit is upon her. I commit it as it may happen to your censure or applause ; with this stipulation, if you do not like it either alter it till you do, or write me another which both you and I shall like better. If that be not fair and rational barter, I know nothing either of trade, logic, or common sense.

ANACREONTIC.

I.

WHEN by the gently gliding stream,
On banks where purple violets spring,
I see my Delia's beauties beam,
I hear my lovely Delia sing.

When hearts combine
And arms entwine,
When fond careffes, am'rous kisses
Yield the height of human blisses,

Entranc'd

Entranc'd I gaze, and sighing say,
Thus let me love my life away.

II.

Or when the jocund bowl we pass,
And joke and wit and whim abound,
When song and catch and friend and lass
In sparkling wine we toast around,
 When Bull and Pun
 Rude riot run,
And finding still the mirth increasing,
Pealing laughter roars sans ceasing,
I peal and roar and pant and say,
Thus let me laugh my life away.

III.

When dreams of fame my fancy fill,
Sweet soothing dreams of verse and rhyme,
That mark the poet's happy skill,
And bid him live to latest time,
 Each rising thought
 With music fraught,
All full, all flowing, nothing wanting,
All harmonious, all enchanting,
Oh thus, in rapt delights I say,
Thus let me sing my life away!

IV.

Oh lovely woman, gen'rous wine,
These potent pleasures let me quaff!

Thy

Thy raptures, wit, oh make them mine !

Oh let me drink and love and laugh !

In flowing verse

Let me rehearse

How well I've used your bounteous treasure ;

Then at last when full my measure,

Tho' pale my lip, I'll smile and say,

I've liv'd the best of lives away.

C. CLIFTON.

LET.

LETTER LXXXVI.

FRANK HENLEY

TO

OLIVER TRENCHARD.

London, Grosvenor Street.

WITHIN a week, Oliver, we shall once more meet. What years of separation may afterward follow is more than I can divine. I surely need not tell thee that this thought of separation, were it not opposed by principle, would indeed be painful, and that it is at moments, almost too mighty for principle itself. But we are
the

the creatures of an omnipotent necessity; and there can be but little need to remind thee that a compliance with the apparently best should ever be an unrepining and cheerful act of duty.

I have had a conversation with Sir Arthur, very singular in its kind, which has again awakened sensations in their full force that had previously cost me many bitter struggles to allay. I began with informing him of my intention to go down to Wenbourne-Hill; after which I proceeded to tell him it was my design to embark for America.

He seemed surprised, and said he hoped not.

I answered I had reflected very fully on the plan, and that I believed it was scarcely probable any reason should occur which could induce me to change my purpose.

The thing, he replied, might perhaps not be so entirely improbable as I supposed. His family had great obligations to me. I had even risked my life on various occasions for them. They thought my talents
very

very extraordinary. In fine, Oliver, the good old gentleman endeavoured to say all the kind and, as he deemed them, grateful things his memory could supply : and added that, should I leave England without affording them some opportunity to repay their obligations, they should be much grieved. There were perhaps two or three very great difficulties in the way ; but still he was not sure they might not be overcome. Not that he could say any thing positively, for matters were he must own in a very doubtful state. He was himself indeed very considerably uneasy, and undetermined : but he certainly wished me exceedingly well, and so with equal certainty at present did all his family. His daughter, his son, himself, were all my debtors.

The good old gentleman's heart overflowed, Oliver, and by its ebullitions raised a tumult in mine, which required every energy it possessed to repel. What could I answer, but that I had done no more for his family than what it was my duty to do

for the greatest stranger; and that, if gratitude be understood to mean a remembrance of favours received, I and my family had for years indubitably been the receivers?

He still persisted however in endeavouring to dissuade me from the thought of quitting the kingdom. Not finding me convinced by his arguments, he hesitated, with an evident desire to say something which he knew not very well how to begin. All minds on such occasions are under strong impulses. My own wish that he should be explicit was eager, and I excited him to proceed. At last he asked if he might put a question to me; assuring me it was far from his intention to offend, but that he had some uneasy doubts which he could be very glad to have removed.

I desired him to interrogate me freely; and to assure himself that I would be guilty of no dissimulation.

He knew my sincerity, he said; but if when I heard I should think any thing in what he asked improper, I past dispute had a right to refuse.

I answered that I suspected or rather was convinced I had no such right, and requested him to begin.

He then stammered, and at last said— I think, Mr. Henley, I have remarked some degree of esteem between you and my daughter—

He stopped—His desire not to wound my feelings was so evident that I determined to relieve him, and replied—

I believe, sir, I can now divine the subject of your question. You would be glad to know if any thing have passed between us, and what? Perhaps you ought to have been told without asking; but I am certain that concealment at present would be highly wrong.

I then repeated as accurately as my memory would permit; which is tolerably tenacious on this subject, all which Anna and I had reciprocally said and done.— It was impossible, Oliver, to make this recapitulation with apathy. My feelings were awakened, and I assure thee the emotions of Sir Arthur were as lively as in

such a mind thou couldst well suppose.—The human heart seems to be meliorated and softened by age. He wept, a thing with him certainly not usual, at the recital of his daughter's heroic resolves in favour of duty, and at her respect for parental prejudices. Her dread of rendering him unhappy made him even sob, and burst into frequent interjections of—"She is a dear girl! She is a heavenly girl! I always loved her! She is the delight of my life, my soul's treasure! From her infancy to this hour, she was always an angel!"

After hearing me fully confirm him in his esteem and affection for so superlative a daughter, he added—You tell me, Mr. Henley, that you freely informed my daughter you thought it was even her duty to prefer you to all mankind, even though her father and friends shall disapprove the match.

I did, sir. I spoke from conviction, and should have thought myself culpable had I been silent.

Perhaps

Perhaps so. But that is very uncommon doctrine.

It was not merely that more felicity would have been secured to ourselves, but greater good I supposed would result to society.

I have heard you explain things of that kind before. I do not very well understand them, but give me leave to ask—Are you still of the same opinion?

I am, sir.—Not that I am so confident as I was—Mr. Clifton has a very astonishing strength of mind: and, should it be turned to the worthy purposes of which it is capable, I dare by no means decide positively in my own favour: and the decision which I now make against him is the result of the intimate acquaintance which I must necessarily have with my own heart, added to certain dubious appearances as to his, which I know not how to reconcile. Of myself I am secure.

And of him you have some doubts?

I have: but I ought in duty to add the
E 3 appearances

appearances of their being unjust are daily strengthened.

Sir Arthur paused, ruminated, and again seemed embarrassed. At last he owned he knew not what to say: turn which way he would the obstacles were very considerable. His mind had really felt more distress, within these two months, than it had ever known before. He could resolve on nothing. Yet he could not but wish I had not been quite so determined on going to America. There was no saying what course things might take. Mrs. Clifton was very ill, and in all probability could not live long. But again he knew not what to say. He certainly wished me very well—Very well—I was an uncommon young man. I was a gentleman by nature, which for aught he knew might be better than a gentleman by birth. The world had its opinions; perhaps they were just, perhaps unjust. He had been used to think with the world, but he had heard so much lately that he was not quite so positive as he had been—[This, Oliver, reminded

reminded me of the power of truth ; how it saps the strong holds of error and winds into the heart, and how incessantly its advocates ought to propagate it on every occasion.] He was not quite so well pleased as he had been with my father, but that was no fault of mine ; he knew I had a very different manner of thinking. Still he must say it was what he very little expected. He hoped however that things would one way or other go more smoothly ; and he concluded with taking my hand, pressing it very warmly, and adding with considerable earnestness——“ If you can think of changing your American project, pray do !—Pray do !—

After which he left me with something like a heavy heart.

And now, Oliver, how ought I to act ? The opposing causes of these doubts and difficulties in his mind are evident. The circumstances which have occurred in my favour, being aided by the obstinate selfishness of my father, by his acquired wealth, and as I suppose by the embroiled

state of Sir Arthur's affairs, have produced an unhop'd for revolution in the sentiments of Sir Arthur. But is it not too late? Are not even the most tragical consequences to be feared from an opposition to Clifton? Nay, if his mind be what his words and behaviour speak, would not opposition be unjust? Were it not better with severe but virtuous resolution to repel these flattering and probably deceitful hopes, than by encouraging them to feed the canker-worm of peace, and add new force to the enemy within, who rather stunned than conquered is every moment ready to revive.

Neither is Sir Arthur master of events. Nor is his mind consistent enough to be in no danger of change.

My heart is sufficiently prone to indulge opposite sentiments, but it must be silenced; it must listen to the voice of truth.

Did I but better understand this Clifton; I should better know how to decide.— That he looks up to her with admiration I am convinced. She seems to have discovered

covered the true key to his understanding as well as to his affections. Even within this day or two, I have observed symptoms very much in his favour. How do I know but thus influenced he may become the first of mankind? The thought restores me to a sense of right. Never, Oliver, shall self complacency make me guilty of what cannot but be a crime most heinous? If such a mind may by these means be gained which would otherwise be lost, shall it be extinguished by me? Would not an assassination like this outweigh thousands of common murders? Well may I shudder at such an act! Oliver, I am resolved. If there be power in words or in reason my father shall comply.

As far as I understand the human mind, there is and even should he persevere there always must be something to me enigmatical in this instance of its efforts in Clifton. Persevere however I most sincerely hope and even believe he will.—But should he not?—The supposition is dreadful!—Anna St. Ives!—My heart sinks within

me!—Can virtue like hers be vulnerable?—Surely not!—The more pure a woman is in principle the more secure would she be from common seducers. But, if the man can be found who possesses the necessary though apparently incompatible excess of folly and wisdom, there is a mode by which such a woman is more open to the arts of deceit than any other. And is not that woman Anna St. Ives? Nay more, if he be not a prodigy of even a still more extraordinary kind, is not that man Coke Clifton?

He came in the heyday of youthful pride, self-satisfied, self-convinced, rooted in prejudice but abundant in ideas. Argument made no impression; for where he ought to have listened he laughed. The weapons of wit never failed him; and, while he lanced them at others, they recoiled and continually lacerated himself. Of this he was insensible: he felt them not, or felt them but little. His haughtiness never slumbered; and to oppose him was to irritate, not convince. For four months

months he continued pertinaciously the same ; then, without any cause known to me, suddenly changed. It was indeed too sudden not to be alarming !

And yet my firm and cool answer to all this is, that hypocrisy so foolish as well as atrocious is all but impossible—

Indeed, Oliver, I do not seek to wrong him : I do not hunt after unfavourable conjectures, they force themselves upon me : or if I do it is unconsciously. The passions are strangely perverse : and if I am deceived, as I hope I am, it is they that misguide me.

Clifton has just been with me. Some correspondent from Paris has mentioned the visit paid to me instead of him by the Count de Beaunoir, but in a dark and unintelligible manner, and he came to enquire. I confess, Oliver, while I was answering his interrogatories, I seemed to feel that both you and I had drawn a false

E 6 conclusion

conclusion relative to secrecy ; and that by concealment to render myself the subject of suspicion was an unworthy procedure. However as my motives were not indirect, whatever my silence might be, I answered without reserve and told him all that had passed ; frankly owning my fears of his irritability as the reason why I did not mention the affair immediately.

He laughed at the Count's rhodomontade, acknowledged himself obliged to me, and allowed that at that time my fears were not wholly causeless. He behaved with ease and good humour, and left me without appearing to have taken any offence.

I shall be with thee on Tuesday. I know it will be a day of feasting to the family, and I will do my best endeavour not to cast a damp on the hilarity of benevolence and friendship.

F. HENLEY.

LETTER

LETTER LXXXVII.

ANNA WENBOURNE ST. IVES

TO

LOUISA CLIFTON.

London, Grosvenor-Street.

ALAS! Louisa, what are we?—What are our affections, what our resolves?—Taken at unguarded moments, agitated, hurried away by passion, how seldom have we for a day together reason to be satisfied with our conduct?

Not pleased with myself, I doubt I have given cause of displeasure to your brother. My father was in part the occasion: for a moment he made me forget myself——

Louisa!

Louisa! — Frank Henley is going to America! He does not lightly resolve, and his resolution seems fixed! — Good God! — I — Louisa! — I am afraid I am a guilty creature! — Weak! — Very weak! — And is not weakness guilt? — But why should he leave us? — Where will he find hearts more alive to his worth?

Sir Arthur came to inform me of it: he had been conversing with him, and had endeavoured but without effect to dissuade him from his purpose. He came and begged me to try. I perhaps might be more successful.

There was a marked significance in his manner, and I asked him why?

Nay, my dear child, said he, and his heart seemed full, you know why. Mr. Henley has told me why.

What, sir, has he told?

Nothing, child — [Sir Arthur took my hand] — Nothing, but what is honourable to you — I questioned him, and you know he is never guilty of falsehood.

No, sir; he is incapable of it.

Well,

Well, Anna, try then to persuade him not to leave us. Though he is a very excellent young man, I am afraid he has not the best of fathers. I begin to feel I have not been so prudent as I might have been; and, if Mr. Henley were to leave England, the father might attribute it to us, and—[Sir Arthur hesitated]—I have received some extraordinary letters from Abimelech, of which I did not at first see the full drift; but it is now clear; every thing corresponds, and my conversation with young Mr. Henley has confirmed all I had supposed. However he is a very good, a very extraordinary young gentleman, and I could wish he would not go. I don't know what may happen.

Your brother came in and Sir Arthur left me, desiring me as he went to remember what he had said. Clifton after an apology asked—Does it relate to me?—At that moment Frank entered. No, said I; it relates to one who I did not think would have been so ready to forsake his friends!

A thousand

A thousand thoughts had crowded to my mind; a dread of having used him ungenerously, unjustly; a recollection of all he had done and all he had suffered; his enquiring, penetrating, and unbounded genius; his superlative virtues; a horror of his being banished his native country by me; of his wandering among strangers, exposed to poverty, perils, and death, with the conviction in his heart that I had done him wrong!—My tumultuous feelings rushed upon me, overpowered me, and in a moment of enthusiasm I ran to him, snatched his hand, fell on my knee and exclaimed—"For the love of God, Mr. Henley, do not think of leaving us!"

Clifton like myself could not conquer the first assault of passion: he pronounced the word madam! in a tone mingled with surprise and severe energy, which recalled me to myself—

You see, said I, turning to him, what an unworthy creature I am!—But Mr. Henley has taken the strangest resolution—!

What,

What, madam, said your brother, recovering himself, and with some pleafantry, is he for a voyage to the moon? Or does he wait the arrival of the next comet to make the tour of the universe?

Nay, answered I, you must join me, and not treat my poor petition with ridicule—You must not go, Mr. Henley; indeed you must not! I, Mr. Clifton, my father, my brother, we will none of us hear of it! We are all your debtors, and it would be unjust in you to deprive us of every opportunity of testifying our friendship.

Your brother, Louisa, made an effort worthy of himself, repressed the error of his first feelings, assumed the gentle aspect of entreaty, and kindly joined me.

We are indeed your debtors, said he to Mr. Henley. But I hope it is not true. I hope there is no danger that you should forsake us. Where would you go? Where can you be so happy?

I mean first, replied Frank, to go to
Wenbourne

Wenbourne Hill ; and after that my intentions are for America.

This, Louisa, brought on a long discussion. I and your brother both endeavoured to convince him it was his duty to remain in England ; that he could be more serviceable here, and would find better opportunities for effecting that good which he had so warmly at heart than in any other country.

He answered that, though he was not convinced by our arguments, he should think it his duty seriously to consider them. But we could not make him promise anything further. Previous to his return from Wenbourne Hill he would determine.

Indeed, Louisa, this affair lies very heavily upon my mind. I am incessantly accusing myself as the cause of his exile. And am I not? By the manner of Sir Arthur I am sure he must have said something very highly in my praise. I have gone too far with your brother to recede : that is now impossible. It would be more flagrant injustice than even the wrong to
Frank,

Frank, if a wrong it be, and indeed, Louisa, I dread it is!—Indeed I do!—I dread it even with a kind of horror!

I thought reason would have appeased these doubts ere this; but every occasion I find calls them forth with unabated vigour. Surely this mental blindness must be the result of neglect. Had we but the will, the determination, it might be removed. Oh how reprehensible is my inconsistency.

The rapid decline of Mrs. Clifton grieves me deeply. Your brother too has frequently mentioned it with feelings honourable to his heart. He is now more than ever sensible of her worth. He has been with me since I began to write this letter, and there is not the least appearance of remaining umbrage on his mind. It was indeed but of short duration, though too strong and sudden not to be apparent.

All kindness, peace, and felicity be with you.

A. W. ST. IVES.

LETTER

LETTER LXXXVIII.



COKE CLIFTON

TO

GUY FAIRFAX.

*London, Dover Street.*

I WILL curse no more, Fairfax. Or, if curse I do, it shall be at my own fatuity. I will not be the dilatory, languid, ranting, moralizing Hamlet of the drama; that has the vengeance of hell upon his lips and the charity of heaven in his heart. I will use, not speak daggers—

Fairfax, I am mad!—Raging!—The smothered and pent-up mania must have vent—What! Was not the page sufficient-
ly

ly black before?—I am amazed at my own infatuation! My very soul spurns at it!—But 'tis past—Deceitful, damned sex!—Idiot that I was, I began to fancy myself beloved!—I!—Blind, deaf, insensate driveller!—Torpid, blockish, brainless mammet!—Most sublime ass!—Oh for a bib and barley sugar, with the label *Meacock* pinned before and behind!—

Fairfax, I never can forgive my own absurd and despicable stupidity!—Marriage!—What, with a woman in whose eye the perfect impression and hated form of a mean rival is depicted?—In colours glowing hot!—Who lives, revels, triumphs in her heart!—I marry such a woman?—I?—

“ I had rather be a toad,
 “ And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,
 “ Than keep a corner in the thing I love
 “ For others' use.”

I am too full of phrensy, Fairfax, to tell thee what I mean: but she has given me another proof, more damning even than all the former, of the gluttony with which
 her

her foul gorges. Her gloating eye devours him; ay, I being present. Nay, were I this moment in her arms, her arms would be clasping him, not me: with him she would carouse, nor would any thing like me exist—Contagion!—Poison and boiling oil!—

Never before was patience so put to the proof—My danger was extreme. With rage flaming in my heart, I was obliged to wear complacency, satisfaction and smiles on my countenance.

The fellow has determined to ship himself for America—Would it were for the bottomless pit!—And had you beheld her panic?—St. Luke's collected maniacs at the full of the moon could not have equalled her!—'Twas well indeed her frantic outrage was so violent, or I had been detected and all had been lost—As it was I half betrayed myself—The fellow's eye glanced at me. However it gave me my cue; and, all things considered, I afterward performed to a miracle. Her own enthusiastic torrent swept all before it, and gave me time.

time. She was in an ecstasy; reasoning, supplicating, conjuring, panting. I, her friends, the whole world must join her: and join her I did. It was the very relief of which hypocrisy stood in need. I entreated this straight-backed youth, stiff in determination, to condescend to lend a pitying ear to our petitions; to suffer us to permeate his bowels of compassion, and avert this fatal and impending cloud, fraught with evils, misery, and mischief—

But marry no!—It could not be!—Sentence was passed—He had been at the trouble to make a pair of scales, and knew the weight to a scruple of every link in the whole chain of cause and effect—Teach him, truly!—Advise him!—Move him! When? Who? How?—At last compliance, willing to be royally gracious, said, Well, it would consider—Though there was but little hope—Nothing it had heard had any cogency of perscrutation—But, in fine, it would be clement, and consider.

Do you not see this fellow, Fairfax? Is he not now before your eyes? Is he not
the

the most consummate——? But why do I trouble myself a moment about him?—It is her!—Her!—

Nor is this all. Did that devil that most delights in mischief direct every concurring circumstance, they could not all and each be more uniform, more coercive to the one great end. This poor dotterel, Sir Arthur, is playing fast and loose with me. He has been at his foundings—He!—Imbecile animal!—Could wish there were not so many difficulties—Is afraid they cannot be all removed—Has his doubts and his fears—Twenty thousand pounds is a large sum, and Mrs. Clifton is very positive—His own affairs much less promising than he supposed—Then by a declension of hems, hums, and has, he descended to young Mr. Henley—A very extraordinary young gentleman?—A very surprising youth!—One made on purpose as it were for plum-cake days, high festivals, and raree show!—A prodigy!—Not begotten, born or bred in the dull blind-man's buff way of simple procreation; but sent us on
a Sun-

a Sunday morning down Jacob's ladder ! —Then for obligations to him, count them who could !—He must first study more arithmetic !—And as for affection it was a very wayward thing—Not always in people's power—There was no knowing what was best—The hand might be given and the heart be wanting—And with respect to whether the opinions of the world ought to be regarded, good truth he knew not. Marry ! The world was much more ready to blame others than to amend itself : and he had been almost lately persuaded not to care a figo for the world. But for his part he was a godly christian, and wished all for the best. He had faith, hope, and charity, which were enough for one.

Do not imagine, Fairfax, the poor do-tard would have dared to betray himself thus far, had not I presently perceived his drift and wormed him of these dismal cogitations of the spirit. He beat about, and hovered, and fluttered, and chirped mournfully, like the poor infatuated bird that beholds the serpent's mouth open, into

which it is immediately to drop and be devoured. However, having begun, I was determined to make him unburden his whole heart. If hereafter he can possibly find courage to face me, in order to reproach, I have my lesson ready. " Out of thy own mouth will I judge thee, " finner."

Gangrened as my heart is, I still find a satisfaction in this self convalescence. The lady of mellifluous speech shall suborn no more ; no more shall lull me into beatific slumbers. I have recovered from my trance, and what I dreamed was celestial I will demonstrate to be mere woman.

From his own lips I learn that this insolent scoundrel received a visit from the Count de Beaunoir, which was intended for me : and, out of tender pity to my body, lest, God 'ild us, it should get a drilling, he did bestow some trifle of that wit and reason, of which he has so great a superflux, upon the Count, thereby to turn aside his wrathful ire.

I heard the gentleman tell his tale, and
tickle

tickle his imagination with the remembrance of his own doctiloquy, with infinite composure ; and, whenever I put a question, took care first to prepare a smile. Every thing was well, better could not be.

With respect to *Monsieur le Comte*, I'll take some opportunity to whisper a word in his ear. It is not impossible, Fairfax, but that I may visit Paris even within this fortnight. Not that I can pretend to predict. They shall not think I fly them, should any soul among them dare to dream of vengeance. I know the Count to be as vain of his skill in the sword as he is of his pair of watch strings, his Paris-Birmingham snuff-box, or the bauble that glitters on his finger. I think I can give him a lesson : at least I mean to try.

My mother's health declines apace. I know not whether it may not shortly be necessary for me to visit her. The loss of her will afflict me, but in all appearance it is inevitable, and I fear not far distant.

Once more, Fairfax, should you again fall in company with the Count, and he

should give himself the most trifling airs, assure him that I will do myself the honour to embrace him within a month at farthest from that date, be it when it will.

Adieu.

C. CLIFTON.

LETTER LXXXIX.



ANNA WENBOURNE ST. IVES

TO

LOUISA CLIFTON.



London, Grosvenor-Street.

HE is gone, Louisa ; has left us ; his purpose unchanged, his heart oppressed, and his mind intent on promoting the happiness of those by whom he is exiled. And what

what am I, or who, that I should do him this violence? What validity have these arguments of rank, relationship, and the world's opprobrium? Are they just? He refuted them: so he thought, and so *persists* to think. And who was ever less partial, or more severe to himself?

Louisa, my mind is greatly disturbed. His high virtues, the exertion of them for the peculiar protection of me and my family, and the dread of committing an act of unpardonable injustice, if unjust it be, are images that haunt and tantalize me incessantly.

If my conclusions have been false, and if his asserted claims be true, how shall I answer those which I have brought upon myself? The claims of your brother, which he urges without remission, are still stronger. They have been countenanced, admitted, and encouraged. I cannot recede. What can I do but hope, ardently hope, Frank Henley is in an error, and that he himself may make the discovery? Yet how long and fruitless have these hopes been! My
F 3 dilemma

dilemma is extreme ; for, if I have been mistaken, act how I will, extreme must be the wrong I commit !

Little did I imagine a moment so full of bitter doubt and distrust as this could come. Were I but satisfied of the rectitude of my decision, there are no sensations which I could not stifle, no affections which I could not calm, nor any wandering wishes but what I could reprove to silence. But the dread of a flagrant, an odious injustice distracts me, and I know not where or of whom to seek consolation. Even my Louisa, the warm friend of my heart, cannot determine in my favour.

Your brother has been with me. He found me in tears, enquired the cause, and truth demanded a full and unequivocal confidence. I shewed him what I had been writing. You may well imagine, Louisa, he did not read it with total apathy. But he suppressed his own feelings with endeavours to give relief to mine.—

He

He argued to shew me my motives had been highly virtuous. He would not say —[His candour delighted me, Louisa,]— He would not say there was no ground for my fears: he was interested and might be partial. He believed indeed I had acted in strict conformity to the purest principles; but, had I even been mistaken, the origin of my mistake was so dignified as totally to deprive the act of all possible turpitude.

He was soothing and kind, gave high encomiums to Frank, took blame to himself for the error of his former opinions, and, reminding me of the motives which first induced me to think of him, tenderly asked If I had any new or recent cause to be weary of my task.

What could I answer? What, but that I was delighted with the rapid change perceptible in his sentiments, and with the ardour with which his enquiries were continued?

Frank Henley is by this time at Wembourne-Hill. You will see him. Plead

our cause, Louisa : urge him to remain among us. Condescend even to enforce my selfish motive, that he would not leave me under the torturing supposition of having banished him from a country which he was born to enlighten, reform, and bless!

There is indeed another argument ; but I know not whether it ought to be mentioned. Sir Arthur owns he is in the power of the avaricious Abimelech, and I believe is in dread of foreclosures that might even eject him from Wenbourne-Hill. This man must have been an early and a deep adventurer in the trade of usury, or he never could have gained wealth so great as he appears to have amassed.

Past incidents, with all of which you are acquainted, have given Sir Arthur a high opinion of Frank : and this added to his own fears, I am persuaded would lead him to consider a union between us at present with complacency, were not such an inclination opposed by other circumstances. The open encouragement that he himself has given to Clifton is one, and it
is

is strengthened by all the interest of the other branches of our family. Your brother is highly in favour with Lord Fitz Allen. My aunt Wenbourne equally approves the match, and Clifton and my brother Edward are become intimate. As to me, reason, consistency, and my own forward conduct, oblige me to be the enemy of Frank.

Louisa, I scarcely know what I write ! Think not I have abandoned myself to the capricious gusts of passion ; or that my love of uncontaminated and rigorous virtue is lessened. No, it is indecision ; it is an abhorrence of injustice which shake and disquiet me.

Write to me ; let me know your sentiments ; and particularly how far your application to Frank, when you have made it, is successful. I am anxious to receive your letter, for I know it will inspire fortitude, of which I am in great, great need.

A. W. ST. IVES.

LETTER XC.

LOUISA CLIFTON

TO

ANNA WENBOURNE ST. IVES.

Rose-Bank.

OH my dearest and ever dear Anna, what shall I say, how shall I assuage doubts that take birth in principles so pure and a heart so void of guile? I know not. I have before acknowledged the mist is too thick for me to penetrate.

The worthy the noble minded Frank has been with us, and I could devise no better way than to shew him your letter. He was greatly moved, and collecting all the firmness of his soul resolutely declared

clared that, since your peace was so deeply concerned, be his own sensations what they might, he would conquer them and remain in England. The heart-felt applause he bestowed upon you was almost insupportably affecting. He has indeed a deep sense of your uncommon worth; and he alone I fear on earth is capable of doing it justice.

But things have taken a different turn; and what can the best of us do, when involved as we continually are in doubt and difficulty, but act as you do with impartial self denial, and the most rigid regard to truth and virtue?

Alas, dear Anna, I too am in need of support, and in search of fortitude!—My mother!—She will not be long among us!—A heart more benevolent, a mind more exalted—! She calls!—I hear her feeble voice!—Not even my Anna must rob her of my company, for these few remaining moments she has yet to come. I am her last consolation.

L. CLIFTON.

I expect you will this post receive a letter from Frank, that will speak more effectually to your heart than I have either the time to do or the power.

LETTER XCI.

FRANK HENLEY

TO

ANNA WENBOURNE ST. IVES.

MADAM,

Wenbourne-Hill.

YOUR generous and zealous friend has thought proper to shew me your letter.— I will not attempt to describe the sensations

tions it excited ; but, as your peace of mind is precious to me, and more precious still perhaps to the interests of society, and since my departure would occasion alarms and doubts so strong, I am determined to stay. My motives for going I thought too forcible and well founded to be overpowered ; nor could they perhaps have been vanquished by any less cause.

—If one of us must suffer the warfare of contending sentiments and principles, let it be me. It was to fly from and if possible forget or subdue them that I projected such a voyage. Our duties to society must not cede to any effeminate compassion for ourselves. We are both enough acquainted with those duties to render us more than commonly culpable, should we be guilty of neglect.

To describe my weakness, and the contention to which my passions have been lately subject, might tend to awaken emotions in you which ought to be estranged from your mind. Our lot is cast : let us seek support in those principles which
first

first taught us reciprocal esteem, nor palliate our desertion of them by that self-pity which would become our reproach.— We have dared to make high claims, form high enterprises, and assert high truths; let us shew ourselves worthy of the pretensions we have made, and not by our proper weakness betray the cause of which we are enamoured.

You will not—no, you are too just—I am sure, madam, you will not attribute resolutions like these, which are more (infinitely more) painful to the heart than they ought to be, to any light or unworthy change of sentiment. Superior gifts, superior attainments, and superior virtues inevitably beget admiration, in those who discover them, for their possessors. Admiration is the parent of esteem, and the continuance and increase of this esteem is affection, or, in its purest and best sense, love. To say I would not esteem and would not love virtue, and especially high and unusual virtue, would be both folly and guilt.

But

But you have taught me how pure and self-denying this love may be. Oh that the man of your choice may but become all you hope, and all of which his uncommon powers are capable! Oh that I may but see you as happy as you deserve to be, and I think I shall then not bestow much pity upon myself.

I have forborne, madam, to intrude the petty disquiets of another kind, from which as you will readily imagine I cannot have been wholly free. Need I say how much I disapprove my father's views, and the mode by which he would have them accomplished? There is no effort I will not make to conquer and remove this obstacle. It wounds me to the heart that you, the daughter of his benefactor, should for a moment be dependant on his avarice. The injury and iniquity are equally revolting, and there are moments when my prejudices falsely accuse me of being a participator in the guilt.

I have had two conversations with my father: they both were animated; but, though

though he was very determined, his resolution begins to fail ; and, as I have justice on my side and am still more determined than he, I have no doubt that in a few days every thing which Sir Arthur has required of him he will be willing to undertake.

However as in a certain sense all is doubtful which is yet to be done, perhaps strict prudence would demand that Sir Arthur should not be led to hope till success is ascertained ; of which I will not delay a moment to send you information.

I am, &c.

F. HENLEY.

LET.

LETTER XCII.

COKE CLIFTON

TO

GUY FAIRFAX.

London, Dover Street.

THE moment, Fairfax, the trying, the great, the glorious moment approaches. Every possible contributing cause calls aloud for expedition, and reprobates delay. This gardening fellow is gone. For his absence I thank him, but not for the resolute spirit with which he intends to attack his father and make him yield. He has a tongue that would silence the congratulated clamours of the Sorbonne, and dumbfound Belial himself in the hall of Pandemonium.

monium. 'Tis certain he has a tough morsel to encounter, and yet I fear he will succeed.

This would destroy all—Marry her?—No!—By Heaven, no! If the hopes of Abimelech be not stubborn enough to persevere, they must and shall be strengthened. His refusal is indispensably necessary in every view, unless the view of marriage, which I once more tell you, Fairfax, I now detest. I should have no plea with her, were that of delay removed.

What is still worse, this delay may be removed by another and more painful cause. My mother it appears declines rapidly: her death is even feared, and should it happen, I cannot pretend to insist on the obstacles of which her maternal cares and provisionary fears have raised.

I can think of no certain expedient, for this Abimelech, but that of an anonymous letter. Neither the writing nor the style must appear to be mine; nor must the hand that writes it understand its purport. Tyros and ignorant as my opponents are, in the tricks

tricks and intrigues of amorous stratagem, still they have too much understanding not to be redoubtable.

The old necromancers, Subtlety and Falsehood, must forge the magic armour and the enchanted shield, under which I fight. Like wizards of yore, they must render me invisible; and the fair form of the foolish Clifton they have imagined must only be seen.

Honest Aby, or I mistake him, is too worthy a fellow to desert so good a cause. And this cloud-capt lady, whose proud turrets I have sworn to level with the dust, will not descend to plead the approaching death of my mother, when I shall urge the injustice of delay — Ay, Fairfax, the injustice! I mean to command, to dare, to overawe; that is the only oratory which can put her to the rout. She loves to be astonished, and astonished she shall be. If I do not shrink from myself her fall is infallible.

My heart exults in the coming joy! Never more will the milky pulp of compassion

passion rise to mar the luxurious meal! She has been writing to the fellow, Fairfax; ay, and has shewn me her letter! For, let her but imagine that truth, or virtue, or principle, or any other abortive being of her own creation, requires her to follow the whims of her disjointed fancy, and what frantic folly is there of which she is incapable?

'Tis maddening to recollect, but she doats on the fellow; absolutely doats! I am the tormenting demon that has appeared to interrupt her happiness; she the devoted victim, sacrificed to shield me from harm! The thought of separation from him is distracting, and every power must be conjured up to avert the horrid woe!

Never before did my feelings support such various and continual attacks; never did I endure infidelity so open or insult so unblushing. But, patience; the day of vengeance is at hand, or rather is here! This moment will I fly and take it! Expect to hear "of battles, sieges, disastrous
" chances, and of moving accidents; but
" not

"not of hair breadth 'scapes!"—Escape she cannot! I go! She falls!

C. CLIFTON.

LETTER XCIII.

FRANK HENLEY

TO

ANNA WENBOURNE ST. IVES.

Wenbourne Hill.

IT is now a week since I wrote to you, madam, at which time I took some pleasure in acquainting you with my hopes of success. These hopes continued to increase, and my father had almost promised to agree to the just proposals I made, when

two days ago he suddenly and pertinaciously changed his opinion.

I am sorry to add that he now appears to be much more determined than ever, and that I am wholly astonished at and wholly unable to account for this alteration of sentiment. I delayed sending you the intelligence by yesterday's post, hoping it was only a temporary return of former projects, which I could again reason away. But I find him so positive, so passionate, and so inaccessible to reason, that I am persuaded some secret cause has arisen of which I am ignorant. Yet do not be dejected, dear madam, nor imagine I will lightly give it up as a lost cause—No—My mind is too much affected and too earnestly bent on its object not to accomplish it, if possible.

I received your letter*, but have no thanks that can equal the favour. I hope the emotions to which it gave birth were
worthy

* It contained the state of her feelings, with which the reader is already acquainted, but no new incidents; for which reason it is omitted.

worthy such a correspondent. I can truly and I believe innocently say, my heart sympathises in all your joys, hopes, and apprehensions; and that my pleasure, at the progress of Mr. Clifton in the discovery of truth and the practice of virtue, is but little less than your own.

I am glad you thought proper to be cautious of giving Sir Arthur any unconfirmed expectations; and I promise you to exert every effort to effect a propitious change in the present temper and resolutions of my father.

I am, dear madam, &c.

F. HENLEY.

LET.

LETTER XCIV.

COKE CLIFTON

TO

GUY FAIRFAX.

London, Dover-Street.

WHEN last I wrote my resolution was taken, and I determined on immediate attack. But I went in a seeming unlucky moment; though I much mistake if it were not the very reverse.

The supposed misfortune I had foreseen fell upon me. The 'squire of preachers had fairly overcome his father's obstinacy, and

and induced him to give ground ! Instead of having received the news of his determined persistency, I found her with a letter in her hand, informing her that he had begun to relent, and that his full acquiescence was expected.

To have commenced the battle at so inauspicious a moment would have been little worthy of a great captain. My resolution was instantly formed.

After acting as much ecstasy as I could call up, I hastened home and wrote my projected letter to honest Aby. I threw my hints together in Italian, that they might not be understood by the agent whom I meant to employ. This was my groom, an English lad whom I met with at Paris, who spells well and writes a good hand. I pretended I had crushed my finger and could not hold a pen ; and, without letting him understand the intent of my writing, or even that it was a letter, I dictated to him as follows ; a transcript of which I send to you, Fairfax, first that you may sigh and see what the blessing of a

ready invention is, and next as an example which you may copy, or at least from which you may take a hint, if ever you should have occasion.

“ SO you have been persuaded at last
“ to give up your point, my old friend !
“ And can you swallow this tale of a tub ?
“ A fine cock and a bull story has been
“ dinned in your ears ? Don’t believe a
“ word on’t. I know the whole affair ;
“ and, though you don’t know me, be
“ assured I mean you well : and I tell you
“ that if you will but hold out stoutly every
“ thing will soon be settled to your heart’s
“ desire. She is dying for love of him,
“ and he can’t see it ! She will never have
“ the man they mean for her ; I can assure
“ you of that ; and what is more, he will
“ never have her. What I tell you I
“ know to be true. No matter who I
“ am. If I knew nothing of the affair
“ how could I write to you ? And if the
“ advice I give be good, what need you
“ care whom it comes from ? Only don’t
“ let

“ let your son see this ; if you do it will
“ spoil all. You perceive how blind he
“ is to his own good, and how positive
“ too. Keep your counsel, but be reso-
“ lute. Look around you, persist in your
“ plans, and the hall, the parks, the gar-
“ dens, the meadows, the lands you see
“ are all your own ! I am sure you can-
“ not misunderstand me. But mark my
“ words ; be close ; keep your thoughts
“ to yourself. You know the world :
“ You have made your own fortune ; don’t
“ mar it by your own folly. Tell no tales,
“ I say ; nor, if you are a wise man, give
“ the least hint that you have a friend in a
“ corner.”

This I dictated to my amanuensis, pre-
tending to translate it out of the paper I
held in my hand, and which I took care
to place before him, so that he should see
it was really written in a foreign language.
I likewise once or twice counterfeited a
laugh at what I was reading, and ejacu-
lated to myself—“ This is a curious scrap !”

When he had finished I gave him half a crown, praised his hand-writing, which I told him I wanted to see, for perhaps I might find him better employment than currying of horses, and sent him about his business too much pleased and elated, and his ideas led into too distant a train to harbour the least suspicion.

Nor did my precautions end here. I immediately ordered my horse, and rode without any attendant full speed to Hounslow. I there desired the landlord of an inn at which I am personally known, though not by name, to send one of his own lads, post, to the market town next to Wenbourne-Hill, and there to hire a countryman, without explaining who or what he himself was, to deliver the letter into the hands of honest Aby. I requested the landlord to choose an intelligent messenger, and backed my request with a present bribe and a future promise.

My plan was too well laid to miscarry, and accordingly yesterday a mournful account arrived, from the young orator, that
judgment

judgment is reversed, and he in imminent danger of being cast in costs.

And now, Fairfax, once more I go!— Expedition, resolution, a torrent of words, a storm of passion, and the peeling thunder that dies away in descending rains! The word is Anna St. Ives, revenge, and victory!

C. CLIFTON.

LETTER XCV.

COKE CLIFTON.

TO

GUY FAIRFAX.

London, Dover Street.

ONCE more, Fairfax, here am I.

Well! And how—?

Not so fast, good sir. All things in
 G 3 their

their turn. The story shall be told just as it happened, and your galloping curiosity must be pleased to wait.

I knew my time, the hour when she would retire to her own apartment, and the minute when I might find admission; for she is very methodical, as all your very wise people more or less are. I had given Laura her lesson; that is, had told her that I had something very serious to say to her mistress that morning, and desired her to take care to be out of the way, that she might be sure not to interrupt us. The fly-jade looked with that arch significance which her own experience had taught her, and left me with—"Oh! Mr. Clifton!"

And here I could make a remark, but that would be anticipating my story.

You may think, Fairfax, that, marshalled as my hopes and fears were in battle array, something of inward agitation would be apparent. In reality, not only some but much was visible. It caught her attention, and luckily caught. I attempted to speak, and stammered. A
false

false step, as it would have been most fatal, so was it more probable at the moment of onset than afterward, when the heated imagination should have collected, arranged, and begun to pour forth its stores.

The philosophy of the passions was the theme I first chose, though at the very moment when my spirits were all fluttering with wild disorder. But my faltering voice, which had I wished I could not have commanded, aided me; for the tremulous state of my frame threw hers into most admirable confusion!

“What was it that disturbed me?”
“What had I to communicate? She
“never saw me thus before! It was
“quite alarming!”

Madam—[Observe, Fairfax, I am now the speaker: but I shall remind you of such trifles no more. If you cannot distinguish the interlocutors, you deserve not to be present at such a dialogue.] Madam, I own my mind is oppressed by thoughts which, however just in their purpose, however worthy in their intent, inspire all that
G 4 hesitation,

hesitation, that timidity, that something like terror, which I scarcely know how to overcome. Yet what should I fear? Am I not armed by principle and truth? Why shun a declaration of thoughts that are founded in right; or tremble like a coward that doubted of his cause? I am your scholar, and have learned to subdue sensations of which the judgment disapproves. From you likewise have I learned to avow tenets that are demonstrable; and not to shrink from them because I may be in danger of being misconstrued, or even suspected. Pardon me! I do you wrong. Your mind is superior to suspicion. It is a mean, an odious vice, and never could I esteem the heart in which it found place. I forget myself, and talk to you as I would to a being of an infinitely lower order.

Mr. Clifton—

Do not let your eye reprove me! I have not said what is not; and who better knows than you how much it is beneath us to refrain from saying what is?

Da

Do not keep me in this suspense ! I am sure there is something very uncommon in your thoughts ! Speak !

Thoughts will be sometimes our masters : the best and wisest of us cannot always command them. That I have daily repressed them, have struggled against rooted prejudices and confirmed propensities, and have ardently endeavoured to rise to that proud eminence toward which you have continually pointed, you are my witness.

I am.

Protracted desires, imagined pleasures, and racking pains [and oh how often have they all been felt!] no longer sway me.— They have been repulsed, disdained, trodden under foot. You have taught me how shameful it is to be the slave of passion. Truth is now my object, justice my impulse, and virtue, high virtue my guide. ✓

Oh, Clifton ! Speak thus, be thus ever !—

The moment it appeared, I knew that delay was ominous.

Nay, Clifton—

Hear me, madam !—Yes ominous ! I see no end to it, have every thing to fear from it, and nothing to hope—There is a thought—Ay, that verges to madness !—I have a rival— ! But I will forget it—at least will try. Who can deny that it is excruciating ?—But I am actuated at present by another and a nobler motive. You know, madam, what you found me ; and I hope you are not quite unconscious of what you have made me. You have taught me principles to which I mean to adhere, and truths I intend to assert ; have opened views to me of immense magnitude ! In your society I am secure. But habits are inveterate, and easily revived ; and were I torn from you, I myself know not the degree of my own danger. Yes, madam, fain indeed would I forget there is such a person as Frank Henley ! Yet how ? By what effort, what artifice ? Say ! Teach me !

me! What though my heart reproaches me with its own foibles, who can prevent possibilities, mere possibilities, in a case like this, from being absolute torments? My soul pants and aches after certainty! The moment I ask myself what doubt there can be of Anna St. Ives, I answer none, none! Yet the moment after, forgetting this question, alarms, probabilities, past scenes and intolerable suppositions swarm to assault me, without relaxation or mercy.

Clifton, you said you had a nobler motive.

I merit the reproach, madam. These effusions burst from me, are unworthy of me, and I disclaim them. You have pardoned many of my frays and mistakes, and I am sure will pardon this. [He looks at the love of fame, Fairfax, do not believe the numerous master-strokes of this dialogue to escape you. I cannot say to point them out.] Yes, madam, I have a nobler motive! Yet, enlarged as your mind is, I know not how to prepare you calmly to

listen to me, without alarm and without prevention. Strange as it may seem, I dread to speak truth even to you!

If truth it be, speak, and fear nothing. Propose but any adequate and worthy purpose, and there is no pain, no danger, no disgrace from which if I know myself I would shrink.

No disgrace, madam?

Your words and looks both doubt me— Put me to the proof. Propose I say an adequate and worthy purpose, and let your test be such as nature shudders at; then despise me and my principles if I recoil.

The union of marriage demands reciprocal, unequivocal, and unbounded confidence; for how can we pretend to love those whom we cannot trust? The man who is unworthy this unbounded confidence is most unworthy to be a husband; and it were even better he should shew his bad qualities, by basely and dishonestly deserting her who had committed herself body and soul to his honour, than that such qualities should discover themselves
after

after marriage. There is no disgrace can equal the torment of such an alliance.

I grant it.

You have attained that noble courage which dares to question the most received doctrines, and bring them to the test of truth. Who better than you can appreciate the falsehood and the force of the prejudices of opinion? Yet are you sure, madam, that even you are superior to them all?

Far otherwise. Would I were! I am much too ignorant for such high such enviable perfection.

But it is not possible that some of the most common, and if I dared I should say the most narrow, the most self-evident of these prejudices may sway and terrify you from the plain path of equity? Dare you look the world's unjust contumelies steadfastly in the face? Dare you answer for yourself that you will not shudder at the performance of what you cannot but acknowledge, nay have acknowledged to be an act of duty?

I confess

I confess your preparation is alarming, and makes me half suspect myself half desirous to retract all I have thought, all I have asserted ! Yet I think I dare do whatever justice can require.

You think— ?

Once more bring me to the proof. I feel a conscious [Again you make me a braggart.] a virtuous certainty.

In opposition to the whole world, its prepossessions, reproofs, revilings, persecutions, and contempt ?

The picture is terrifying, but ought not to be, and I answer yes ; in opposition to and in defiance of them all.

Then—You are my wife !

How ?

Be firm ! Start not from the truth ! You are my wife ! Ask yourself the meaning of the word. Can set forms and ceremonies unite mind to mind ? And if not they, what else ? What but community of sentiments, similarity of principles, reciprocal sympathies, and an equal ardour for and love of truth ? Can it be denied ?

It

It cannot.

You are my wife, and I have a right to the privileges of a husband !

A right ?

An absolute, an indefeasible right !

You go too fast !

They are your own principles : they are principles founded on avowed and indisputable truths. I claim justice from you ?

Clifton !

Justice !

This is wrong !—Surely it is wrong !—
This cannot be !

Instead of the chaste husband, such as better times and spirits of higher dignity have known, who comes with lips void of guile the rightful claimant of an innocent heart, in which suspicion never harboured, imagine me to be a traitorous wretch, who poorly seeks to gratify a momentary, a vile, a brutal passion ! Imagine me, I say, such a creature if you can !—Once I should have feared it ; but you have taught my thoughts to soar above
such

such vulgar terrors. My appeal is not your passions, but your principles. Inspired by that refulgent ardour which animates you, with a noble enthusiasm you have yourself bid me put you to the proof.—You cannot, will not, dare not be unjust!

And now, Fairfax, behold her in the very state I wished! Cowed, silenced, overawed! Her ideas deranged, her tongue motionless, wanting a reply, her eyes wandering in perplexity, her cheeks growing pale, her lips quivering, her body trembling, her bosom panting! Behold I say the wild disorder of her look! Then turn to me, and read secure triumph, concealed exultation, and bursting transport on my brow! While impetuous, fierce, and fearless desire is blazing in my heart, and mounting to my face! See me in the very act of fastening on her! And see—!

Curse!—Everlasting curses pursue and catch my perfidious evil genius!—See that old Incubus Mrs. Clarke enter, with a letter in her hand that had arrived express, and was to be delivered instantly!—Our mutual

mutual perturbation did not escape the prying witch; my countenance red, hers pale—The word begone! maddened to break loose from my impatient tongue.—My eyes however spoke plainly enough, and the hag was unwillingly retiring, when a faint—"Stay, Mrs. Clarke"—called her back!

As I foreboded, it was all over for this time! She opened the letter. What its contents were I know not; and impossible as it is that they should relate to me, I yet wish I did. I am sure by her manner they were extraordinary. I could not ask while that old beldam was present [Had she been my grandmother, on this occasion I should have abused her.] and the eye of the young lady very plainly told me she wished me away. It was prudent to make the best retreat possible, and with the best grace: I therefore bowed and took my leave; very gravely telling her I hoped she would seriously consider what I had said, and again emphatically pronounced the word *justice*!

You

You have now, Fairfax, been a spectator of the scene ; and if its many niceties have escaped you, if you have not been hurried away, as I was, by the tide of passion, and amazed at the successful sophistries which flowed from my tongue, sophistries that are indeed so like truth that I myself at a cooler moment should have hesitated to utter them ; if I say the deep art with which the whole was conducted, and the high acting with which I personified the only possible Being that could subjugate Anna St. Ives do not excite your astonishment, why then you really are a dull fellow ! But I know you too well, Fairfax, to do you such injustice as this supposes. Victory had declared for me. — I read her thoughts. They were labouring for an answer, I own ; but she was too much confounded. And would I have given her time to rally ? — No ! — I should then have merited defeat.

The grand difficulty however is vanquished : she will hear me the next time with less surprise, and the emotions of passion,

passion, genuine honest mundane passion, must take their turn ; for not even she, Fairfax, can be wholly exempt from these emotions. I have not the least fear that my eloquence should fail me, and absolute victory excepted, I could not have wished for greater success.

I cannot forget this letter. It disturbs and pesters my imagination. I supposed it to be from Edward, who has been at Bath ; but my valet has just informed me he is returned. Perhaps it is from my sister ; and if so, by its coming express, my mother is dead ! I really fear it bodes me harm—I am determined to rid myself of this painful suspense. I will therefore step to Grosvenor-street. I may as well face the worst at once. You shall hear more when I return.

Oh, Fairfax ! I could curse most copiously,

ously, in all heathenish and christian tongues! She has shut herself up, and refuses to see me! This infernal fellow Frank Henley is returned too. He arrived two hours after the express. I suspect it came from him; nay I suspect —Flames and furies!—I must tell you!—

I have seen Laura, though scarcely for two minutes. She is afraid she is watched. It is all uproar, confusion, and suspicion at Sir Arthur's. But the great curse is my groom, the lad that I told you copied my letter to Abimelech, has been sent for and privately catechised by her and her paramour! And what confirms this most tormenting of all conjectures is the absence of the fellow: he has not been home since, nor at the stables, though he was always remarkably punctual, but has sent the key; so that he has certainly absconded.

Had I not been a stupid booby, had I given Laura directions to keep out of the way of Anna, but in the way of taking
messages

messages for her, she might have received the express, and all might have been well. Such a blockheadly blunder well deserves castigation !

I'll deny the letter, Fairfax. They have no proof, and I'll swear through thick and thin rather than bring myself into this universal, this damnatory disgrace ! I know indeed she will not believe me ; and I likewise know that now it must be open war between us. For do not think that I will suffer myself to be thus shamefully beaten out of the field.—

No, by Lucifer and his Tophet ! I will die a foaming maniac, fettered in straw, ere that shall happen ! If not by persuasion, she shall be mine by chicanery, or even by force. I will perish, Fairfax, sooner than desist !

Oh for an agent, a coadjutor worthy of the cause !——He must and shall be found.

The uncle and aunt must be courted : the father I expect will side with her.—The brother too must be my partizan ; for
it

it will be necessary I should maintain an intercourse, and the shew of still wishing for wedlock.

I am half frantic, Fairfax ! To be baffled by such an impossible accident, after having acted my part with such supreme excellence, is insupportable ! But the hag Vengeance shall not slip me ! No I have fangs to equal hers, ay and will fasten her yet ! I have been injured, insulted, frustrated, and fiends seize me if I relent.

C. CLIFTON.

LETTER

LETTER XCVI.

ANNA WENBOURNE ST. IVES

TO

LOUISA CLIFTON.

London, Grosvenor-Street.

LOUISA!—My dear, my kind, my affectionate Louisa!—My friend!—What shall I say? How shall I begin? I am going to rend your heart.

Keep this letter from the sight of Mrs. Clifton: if she have not already been told, do not let her know such a letter exists—Oh this brother!—But he is not your brother—Error so rooted, so malignant, so destructive, exceeds all credibility!

He

He came to me yesterday morning, as was his custom. There was something in his look which, could I but have read it, was exceedingly descriptive of the workings of his heart. It was painful to see him. He endeavoured to smile, and for a moment to talk triflingly, but could not. He was in a tremor; his mouth parched, his lips white.

His next essay was to philosophise; but in this attempt too he was entirely at fault,

The passions are all sympathetic, and none more so than this of trepidation. I cannot recollect what the ideas were that passed hastily through my mind; but I know he excited much alarm, doubt, and I believe suspicion.

But, though he had found all this difficulty to begin, having begun he recovered himself very surprisingly. His colour returned, his voice became firm, his ideas clear, his reasoning energetic, and his manner commanding. He seemed to mould my hopes and apprehensions as he pleased,

pleased, to inspire terror this moment, and excess of confidence the next.

Louisa, my heart bleeds to say it, but his purposes were vile, his hypocrisy odious, and—I must forbear, and speak of foul deeds in fair terms. I know not how many prejudices rise up to warn me; one that I am a woman, or rather a girl; another that I am writing to the man's sister; a third that she is my friend, and so on with endless *et ceteras*. No matter that truth is to this friend infinitely more precious than a brother. I may be allowed to feel indignation, but not to express my feeling.

But the most distressing, the most revolting part of all is, that he harangued like the apostle of truth, the name of which he vilely prophaned, in favour of the basest, most pitiful, most contemptible of vices; the mere vain-glory of seduction. He has not even so much as the gratification of sensual appetite to plead in his excuse. I am wrong; it was not vain-glory. Vanity itself, contemptible as such a stimulus

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would have been, was scarcely a secondary motive. It was something worse; it was revenge. My mind has been wholly occupied in retracing his past behaviour; I can think on no other subject, and every trait which recollection adds is a confirmation of this painful idea. He does not wish to marry me, and I almost doubt whether he ever did, at least fully and unreservedly.

He came to me, Louisa, and began with painting the torments of delay and the pangs of jealousy, which he endeavoured to excuse; and concluded with a bold appeal to my justice; a daring, overawing, confounding appeal. He called upon me at my peril, and as I respected truth and virtue, to deny his claim.

And what was this claim?—I was his wife!—In every pure and virtuous sense his wife; and he demanded the privilege of a husband!—Demanded, Louisa!—Demanded!—And demanded it in such a tone, with such rapid, overbearing, bold expressions, and such an apparent consciousness

sciousness of right, that for a moment my mind was utterly confused!

Not that it ceded; no, not an instant. I knew there was an answer, a just and irrefragable one, but I could not immediately find it. He perceived my disorder, and you cannot imagine what a shameless and offensive form his features assumed! I know not what he would not instantly have attempted, had not, while I was endeavouring to awake from my lethargy, Mrs. Clarke come in! She brought me a letter—It was sent express!—The handwriting was Frank's! Agitated as I was, suspicion influenced me, and I retreated a few steps—I opened the letter, and the first words I saw were—"Beware of Mr. Clifton."—

It contained only half a dozen lines, and I read on. What follows were its contents—

"Beware of Mr. Clifton!—Had I not
"good cause, madam, I would not be so
"abrupt an accuser: but I am haunted,
"tortured by the dread of possibilities; and

“ therefore send this away express—Be-
“ ware of Mr. Clifton!—I will not be
“ long after the letter, and I will then
“ explain why I have written what to you
“ may appear so strange.

“ F. HENLEY.”

Think, Louisa, what must be the effect of such a letter, coming at such a moment!—I believe I was in no danger; though, if there be a man on the face of the earth more dangerous than any other, it is surely Clifton. But the watchful spirit of Frank seems placed like my guardian angel, to protect me from all possible harm.

My mind debated for a moment whether it were not wrong to distrust the power of truth and virtue, and not to let Mr. Clifton see I could demolish the audacious sophistry by which he had endeavoured to confound and overwhelm me. But my ideas were deranged, and I could not collect sufficient fortitude. Oh how dangerous is this confusion of the judgment,

ment, and how desirable that heavenly presence of mind which is equal to these great, these trying occasions! I therefore thought it more prudent to suffer him to depart, and suspect vilely of me, than to encounter the rude contest which he would more audaciously recommence, were I to send away Mrs. Clarke, which he might even misconstrue into a signal of approbation. These fears prevailed, and I desired her to stay, and by my manner told him I wished his absence.

Louisa, how shall I describe my anguish of heart at seeing all those hopes of a mind so extraordinary, for extraordinary it is even in guilt, at once overthrown? It was indeed iteration of anguish! What! Can guile so perfectly assume the garb of sincerity! Can hypocrisy wear so impenetrable a mask? How shall we distinguish? What guide have we? How be certain that the next seeming virtuous man we meet is not a——Well, well, Louisa—I will remember—Brother. My Louisa knows it is not from the person, but from

the vice that I turn away with disgust. Would I willingly give her heart a pang? Let her tell me if she can suspect it. She has fortitude, she has affection; but it is an affection for virtue, truth, and justice. She will endeavour to reform error the most obdurate. So will I, so will all that are worthy the high office. But she will not wish me either to marry with or to countenance this error. Marry?—How does my soul shudder at the thought! His reasoning was just; seduction would have been a petty injury, or rather a blessing, compared to this master evil! He was most merciful when he meant me, as he thought, most destruction. I have been guilty of a great error. The reformation of man or woman by projects of marriage is a mistaken, a pernicious attempt. Instead of being an act of morality, I am persuaded it is an act of vice. Let us never cease our endeavours to reform the licentious and the depraved, but let us not marry them.

The letter had not been delivered more than two hours before Frank arrived. You may think, Louisa, how hard he had ridden; but he refused to imagine himself fatigued. He brought another letter, which Abimelech had received, but which for some hours he obstinately refused to give up, and for this reason Frank sent off the express. A letter, not of Clifton's writing, but of his invention and sending!

Finding that Frank was likely to prevail on his father to raise the money for Sir Arthur, and to obviate all further impediments to our marriage, Clifton, fearful that it should take place, wrote anonymously to Abimelech, to inform him I was in love with Frank; and to encourage him to persist. But read the letter yourself; the following is a true copy of it*.

If such a letter be his, I am sure, Louisa, you will not say I have thought or
H 4 spoken

* The reader has already perused it in Letter XCIV, to which he is referred.

spoken too unkindly of him ; and that it is his we have indubitable proof, though it was anonymous and not in his handwriting.

You no doubt remember, Louisa, the short story of the English lad, whom your brother hired at Paris. It was written by him, though innocently and without knowing what was intended. This lad has an aunt, who after having laboured to old age is now lame, infirm, and in need of support. The active Frank has been with her, has aided her with money and consoled her with kindness. The lad himself was desirous of assisting her ; and Frank, willing to encourage industry in the young, gave him some writings to copy at his leisure hours. By this accident he knew the lad's hand writing.

I forgot to mention, in its proper place, the astonishment of Frank at the sudden change in his father, and the firm resolution he took to discover the cause of this change. The obstinacy of Abimelech was extreme ; but Frank was still more pertinacious,

cious, more determined, and so unwearied and incessant, in his attacks on his father, that the old man at last could resist no longer, and shewed him this letter.

From what has preceded, that is from his manner of acting, you may well imagine what the alarms and sensations of Frank were. He brought the letter up with him, for he would not trust it out of his own custody, and immediately went himself to Clifton's stables in search of the lad, brought him to me, and then first shewed him the letter, which, that no possible collusion might be alleged, he had left in my keeping, and then asked if it were not his hand-writing. The lad very frankly and unhesitatingly answered it was; except the direction, which this plotting Clifton had procured to be written by some other person.

Without telling the lad more than was necessary, Frank advised him to quit his service, for that there was something relating to that letter which would certainly occasion a quarrel, and perhaps worse,

between him and his master: and, as it would be prudent for him to keep out of the way, he sent him down to Wenbourne-Hill, where the lad is at present.

And now what shall I say to my Louisa? How shall I sooth the feelings of my friend? Do they need soothing? Does she consider all mankind as her relations and brothers, or does she indeed imagine that one whose principles are so opposite to her own is the only brother she possesses? Will she grieve more for him than she would for any other, who should be equally unfortunate in error? Or does she doubt with me whether grief can in any possible case be a virtue? And if so, is there any virtue of which she is incapable? What is relation, what is brother, what is self, if relation, brother, or self be at war with truth? And does not truth command us to consider beings exactly as they are, without any respect to this relationship, this self?

But

But I know my Louisa ; she will never be impatient under trial, however severe ; nor foolishly repine for the past, though she will strenuously labour for the future.

All good, all peace, all happiness, all wisdom be with her !

A. W. ST. IVES.

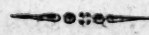
LETTER XCVII.



LOUISA CLIFTON

TO HER BROTHER

COKE CLIFTON.



Rest Bank.

SIR,

ON Friday morning I received the original letter from Anna St. Ives, of which

the inclosed is a copy ; and on the following day about a quarter of an hour before midnight my mother expired. I mention these circumstances together because they were noticed, by those who were necessarily acquainted with them, as having a relation to each other ; whether real or imaginary, much or little I do not pretend to determine ; but I will relate the facts and leave them to your own reflection ; and I will forbear all colouring, that I may not be suspected of injustice.

My mother as you know has been daily declining, and was indeed in a very feeble state. She seemed rather more chearful that morning than she had been lately, and at her particular request I went to visit the wife of farmer Beardmore, who is a worthy but poor woman, and who being at present dejected, in consequence of poverty and ill health, my mother thought she might be more benefited by the kindness of the little relief we could afford her if delivered by me, than if sent by a less soothing and sympathetic hand. I should
hope,

hope, fir, it would be some consolation to you to learn that my mother's active virtue never forsook her, while memory and mind remained. But of this you are the best judge.

While I was gone the postman brought the letter of my friend ; and as her letters were always read to my mother, and as I likewise have made it a rule and a duty not to have any secrets to conceal from her, or indeed from any body, she had no scruple to have the letter opened, because she expected to find consolation and hope : for, till the arrival of this, the letters of Anna St. Ives have lately been all zealous in your praise.

I will leave you, fir, to imagine the effect which a letter beginning as this did must have on a mind and body worn to such a tremulous state of sensibility. Coming as it did first into my mother's hands, the very caution which the benevolent heart of Anna dictated produced the effect the most dreaded. My mother had still
however

however a sufficient portion of her former energy to hear it to the end.

In about an hour after this happened I returned, and found her in extreme agitation of mind. I neglected no arguments, no efforts to calm her sensations; and I succeeded so far that after a time she seemed to be tolerably resigned. She could not indeed forget it, and the subject was revived by her several times during the day.

My chief endeavour was to lead her thoughts into that train which, by looking forward to the progress of virtue, is most consoling to the mind of virtue.

She seemed at last fatigued, and about eleven o'clock at night fell into a doze.— About a quarter before twelve I perceived her countenance distorted; I was alarmed; I spoke to her and received no answer; I endeavoured to excite attention or motion, but in vain. A paralytic stroke had deprived her of sensation. In this state she remained four-and-twenty hours, and about midnight departed.

I have

I have thought it strictly incumbent on me to relate these circumstances. But I should consider myself as very highly culpable did I seek to aggravate, or to state that as certainty which can never be any thing more than conjecture. My mother was so enfeebled that we began to be in daily apprehension of her death. I must not however conceal that the thought of your union with Anna St. Ives had been one of her principal pleasures, ever since she had supposed it probable ; and that she had spoken of it incessantly, and always with that high degree of maternal affection and cheering hope which you cannot but know was congenial to her nature.

The disappointment itself was great, but the turpitude that attended it much greater. This I did not endeavour to palliate. How could I ? I have told you I had no resource for consolation, either for myself or her, but in turning like Anna St. Ives, from the individual to the whole.

I would endeavour to say something that should shew you the folly of such conduct ; for

the folly of it is even more excessive than the vice ; but, not to mention the state of my own mind at this moment, I despair of producing any effect, since Anna St. Ives herself, aided by so many concurring motives, has failed in the generous and disinterested attempt.

I imagine you will be down at the funeral. Perhaps it is proper. I cannot say, for indeed I do not very well understand many of what are called the proprieties of custom. I own I am weak enough to feel some pain at meeting you, under the present circumstances. But, since it is necessary I should act and aid you in various family departments, if you should come down, I will not yield to these emotions, but considering you as an erring brother, will endeavour to perform what duty requires.

L. CLIFTON.

P. S. Previous to this I wrote three different letters, but they were all as I fear
too

too expressive of those strong sensations which I have found it very difficult to calm. I destroyed them, not because they were wrong, but lest they should produce a wrong effect.

LETTER XCVIII.

COKE CLIFTON

TO HIS SISTER

LOUISA CLIFTON.

London, Dover-Street.

M A D A M,

I HAVE received your very lenient, equitable, calumniating, insulting letter ; and
I would

I would have you put it down in your memorandum-book that I will carefully remember the obligation. It perfectly accords with your sublime ideas of justice to decide before you have heard both parties ; and it is equally consistent with your notions of sisterly affection that you should pass sentence on a brother. What is a brother, or all he may have to say to you ; who, more infallible than the holy father himself, have squared a set of rules of your own, by which you judge as you best know how ?

Your insinuations concerning the death of my mother are equally charitable, and I have already learnt them by rote. Yes, madam, assure yourself they will not be forgotten. Any suspense of judgment would have ill become a lady so clear sighted. However possible it may be that Anna St. Ives may herself have been imposed upon, and I both ignorant and innocent of this forged letter, yet for you to have entertained any doubts in my favour would have partaken too much of the
fogs

fogs of earth for so inspired and celestial a lady.

But I must tell you, madam, since you can so readily forego equity in a brother's behalf, I can and will be as ready to forget and cast off the sister. I never yet was or will be injured with impunity: I would have you note down that.

I mean to be at Rose-Bank to-morrow or the day after, to attend the funeral and take such orders as my affairs may require; and though I have as little affection for your company as you have for mine, I imagine it will be quite necessary for you to be there: not only that you should be present to execute all orders, but likewise to listen to a few hints which I shall probably think proper to communicate.

In the mean time, madam, be industrious to propagate the report, if you think fit, that I have caused anonymous letters to be written to Sir Arthur's steward, have endeavoured to betray Anna St. Ives, and have been the death of my mother. Spread the agreeable intelligence I say as quickly
and

and as widely as you can, and when you meet me you shall receive a brother's thanks.

C. CLIFTON.

LETTER XCIX.

ABIMELECH HENLEY

TO

SIR ARTHUR ST. IVES, BARONET.

Wenbourne Hill.

Most onnurable Sir, my ever onnurd Master,

I DO hear of strange queerums and quicksets, that have a birf trap laid for your ever gracious onnur, and for the mercifool

mercifool lovin kindness of sweet missee.— Whereof I be all in a quandary, for it do seem I wus within an ames ace of a havin bin chouse flickur'd meself. Whereby I paradventered before to tell your noble onnur my poor thofts on this here Mr. Clifton match marriage, which is all against the grain. And this I do hope your ever onnurable onnur will pry into, and see with your own eyes.

Whereof I have a bin ruminatin of many thinks lately, and of the ups and downs of life, so that I should sing oh be joyfool if as your onnur would but turn them into your thofts, as I have done. Whereby my son has a bin down with me; and I do find that sooth and trooth he be verily a son of my own begittin; and thof I say it a man may be proud of sitch a son; and as your ever gracious onnur wus most mercifoolly pleased to sifflicate, a wus born a gentleman, for a has his hid fool and fool of fine notions.

Whereby if your onnurable onnur will but a be pleased to lend a mercifool ear
to

to me, why mayhap I should a be willin to come down with the kole to your onnur's heart's content. Why not? For I have a talked matters over with my son, and a has said a many glorious thinks of your onnur and of sweet mercifool missee, all a witch a learned from me. For why? He is my own son, and of the issue of my loins, and I did always giv'n the best of advice. A had his whole feedin and breedin from me, and as a wus always fain to be a man of learnin why I taught him his letters meself; whereof I have now reason to be proud of'n.

But that is not whereof of a what I wus a goin to think to say. I wus about to peradventer to proposal to your onnur that, if thinks might behappen to come to pass in the manner of mercifool lovin kindness and gracious condysension, the where-withalls should a be forth cummin to the tune of fifty thousand pounds: that is with the betokenin of all proper securities of parchments and deeds and doofoors to be first signed and stipulated, as heretofore have

have bin on like future occasions. Take me ritely, your onnur; I mean for the twenty thousand pounds. For why? I meself will be so all bountifool as to come down on the nail head with thirty thousand for my son. And then we shall see who will be a better gentleman, as your onnurable onnur wus most graciously pleased to kappaisus him?

Whereby Wenbourne Hill would then be in all its glory; and mayhap your ever gracious onnur might in sitch a case again go on with your improofments. And who can say but the wildurnefs might a begin to flourish? So that if your noble onnur will but think of that, why thinks may behappen to begin to take a new turn, and there may be mirth and merry days again at Wenbourne-Hill. For I do know in your heart your onnur do lamentation the loss of all your fine taste, and elegant ideers, and plans, and alterations; all of a witch have a bin so many years a carryin on and a compassin at Wenbourne-Hill.

Whereof

Whereof I umbelly condyfund to intreat your noble onnur would a give these thinks a thinkin. For why? The lawyers might a then be stoppt, and a spoke might a be-happen to be put in the wheel of the foreclosures; witch if not, as your noble onnur already knows, may not a turn out to be altogether quite so agreeable, unless your ever gracious and onnurable onnur should be so all mercifool as to rite to me; whereof I could then give them the whys and the wherefores, and all thinks would be smooth and smilin.

I besiege your most noble onnur to ponderate mercifooly of these thinks, and of a dockin of the entail, and of a settin of the deeds of the lawyers to work.—Whereby every think may in fitch a case be made safe and secure, nor forgettin Wenbourne Hill; and the willdurness, and mayhap the hermuttidge, and the grotto. For why, your noble onnur? Where one fifty thousand pound be a forth cummin from, another may a be-happen

happen to be found. But that's a nether here nor there, a favin and exceptin the death and mortality of man, and the resurrection of the just and of the repentin sinner in all grace and glory.

And so I most umbelly remain, with the thanks givin of goodness, your onnur's most faithfool umbel farvent everlastin to command,

ABIMELECH HENLEY.

LETTER C.

ANNA WENBOURNE ST. IVES

TO

LOUISA CLIFTON.

London, Grosvenor-Street.

No; I will not attempt to console my Louisa, for I will not suppose even at the

present moment that she yields to grief, or is in need of consolation. She will not repine at what is not to be remedied, nor debilitate her mind by dwelling on her own causes of discontent, instead of awakening it to the numerous sources of happiness, which by increasing the happiness of others incite it to activity. These are truths too deeply engraven on the heart of Louisa to be forgotten, and it is scarcely necessary to revive them even at this serious moment.

With respect to myself, my friend shall be my judge; my whole conduct shall be submitted to her, with an injunction not to indulge any partialities in my favour, but to censure, advise, and instruct me whenever she finds opportunity. Such, Louisa, has been our intercourse; and we have mutual reason to congratulate each other on its effects.

I have just had a conversation with Sir Arthur. He has received a letter from Abimelech, which he shewed me. Of all the proofs Frank has yet given of energy, this relative to his father is perhaps
the

the strongest. You know the character of Abimelech. Could you think it possible? He is willing not only to raise twenty thousand pounds for Sir Arthur, but to pay down thirty more for his son? He begins to be vain of this son, and has even some slight perception that there may be other good qualities beside that of getting and hoarding money.

But his cunning is still predominant.— Having conceived the possibility of this marriage, the accomplishment of it is now become his ruling passion, and has for a moment subjected avarice itself. He neglects no motive which he thinks may influence Sir Arthur, not even threatening; though his language is couched in all the art of apparent kindness and adulation.— His letter however has produced its effect on my father, as you will perceive by the following dialogue, which was begun by Sir Arthur.

What think you of this proposal, Anna?

I ought rather to ask what are your thoughts on the subject, sir.

I can scarcely tell. I own it does not seem to me quite so unreasonable as I should once have supposed it; that is, as far as relates to me. But if you should have conceived any partiality for Mr. Clifton, I should then——

Excuse me, sir, for interrupting you, but Mr. Clifton is at present wholly out of the question. Were it in my power, which I fear it is not, to do him any service, I should be as desirous of doing it now as ever; but I can never more think of him as a husband.

Are you so very determined?

I am; and I hope, sir, my determination is not offensive to you?

I cannot say at present that it is; for not to mention that I think very well of young Mr. Henley, I own the affair of the anonymous letter was a very improper and strange proceeding. Your aunt Wenbourne and Lord Fitz-Allen indeed seem to doubt it; but, according to the account which you and Mr. Henley give, I think they have no foundation for their doubts.

The

The behaviour of Mr. Clifton, without the letter, would have been quite sufficient to have fixed my determination.

What behaviour?

The proof he gave of deceit and depravity of principle, by the manner in which he endeavoured to seduce me.

When was that?

The very day on which Frank arrived. Endeavoured to seduce you?

Yes.

Are you certain of the truth of what you say?

He proceeded too far, and explained himself too openly for me to be mistaken.

Seduce you!—Then you have entirely given up all thoughts of him?

All thoughts of marrying him I have most certainly.

And what is your opinion of Mr. Henley?

What can it be, sir? Are there two opinions concerning him? And if I were blind to his virtues, for whose safety he

has been so often and so ardently active, who should do him justice ?

I own, Anna, I have often thought you had some love for him, and I am tempted to think so still.

Love in the sense in which you understand it I have carefully suppressed, because till now I supposed it incompatible with duty and virtue ; but I acknowledge I begin to doubt ; and even to suppose that his view of the subject has been more rational and true than mine ; and he thinks it is our duty to form an union, for which he owns he has an ardent wish.

Yes, he has honestly told me all that passed between you ; and his sincerity pleased me—But every branch of our family would certainly be against such a match.

I suppose so.

The world too would consider me as having dishonoured myself, were I to consent.

I believe it would.

And

And would exclaim against the bad example—What ought to be done?

My opinion has been that the world would have cause to make this complaint; but I now think, or rather imagine myself convinced that I was in an error. It appears evident to my mind, at present, that we ought to consider whether an action be in itself good or bad, just or unjust, and totally to disregard both our own prejudices, and the prejudices of the world. Were I to pay false homage to wealth and rank, because the world tells me it is right that I should do so, and to neglect genius and virtue, which my judgment tells me would be an odious wrong, I should find but little satisfaction in the applause of the world, opposed to self-condemnation.

Mr. Henley is a very good young man; a very good young man indeed; and I believe I should even be willing to think of him for a son, if it should not be opposed by the other branches of the family.

But that it surely will.

I am afraid so—Lord Fitz-Allen is half reconciled to us again, and I would avoid breaking with him if possible. Your aunt has a good opinion of Mr. Henley.

But a better of Mr. Clifton.

Yes, so I suppose. I must talk to Edward. Mr. Henley has been his friend.

But Edward does not understand friendship. When he says friend, he means acquaintance : and he finds him the most agreeable acquaintance, who tells him least truth ; which certainly is not Mr. Henley. I have observed him lately to be rather fond of the company of Mr. Clifton, whom he thinks a better companion.

I own Mr. Henley is very obstinate in his opinions.

If his opinions be true, would you not have him persist in the truth ?

But why should he be more certain that what he says is truth than other people ?

Because he has examined with more industry and caution, has a stronger mind, and a greater love of enquiry. He does not endeavour to make his principles accord

cord with his practice, but regulates his practice by his principles.

But still I ask what proof he has of being more in the right than other people?

I wonder, sir, that you can put such a question! He has surely given both you and me sufficient proofs of superiority; and though you should doubt the arguments, you cannot doubt the facts.

I own he is a very extraordinary young gentleman.

Ah, sir! The word gentleman shews the bent of your thoughts. Can you not perceive it is a word without a meaning? Or, if it have a meaning, that he who is the best man is the most a gentleman?

I know your notions, child, and mine differ a little on these matters. However I do not think you quite so much in the wrong as I used to do; and perhaps there is something in what you say. Many men of low fortunes have made their way to the highest honours; and for what I know he may do the same.

He may and certainly will deserve the highest respect; but if you flatter yourself, sir, that he will seek or accept the titles and distinctions which men have invented to impose on each other's folly, and obtain their own artful purposes, I ought to warn you that you will be mistaken. His whole life will be devoted to the discovery and spreading of truth; and, individual acts of benevolence excepted, his wealth, should he acquire any, will all be dedicated to that sole object.

I am afraid these are strange whims, Anna!

I hope yet to shew you, sir, they are noble duties; which it is the excess of guilt to neglect.

It puzzles me to conceive by what means his father could have become so rich!

He has all his life been rapacious after money. His faculties are strong, but perverted. What would have been wisdom is degenerated into cunning. He has made himself acquainted with usurers, and
they

they have made him acquainted with spendthrifts. He has traded in annuities, and profited by the eagerness of youth to enjoy: and, since I must be sincere, he has encouraged you, sir, to pursue plans of expence with a view solely to his own profit.

Well, well; should this marriage take place, it will all return into the family.

That should be no motive, sir, with either you or me.

I do not know that. You understand your own reasons, and I mine; and if they should but answer the same end there will be no harm.

I was going to reply, but Sir Arthur left me; being unwilling to hear arguments which he took it for granted he should not understand.

Frank came in soon after, and I repeated to him what had been said. Louisa, I must tell you the truth and the whole truth. Since I have begun to imagine I might indulge my thoughts in dwelling on his exalted qualities and uncommon virtues, my

affection for them has greatly increased: and they never appeared to me more lovely than in the struggles and checks which his joy received, at the hope of our union, by the recollection of the loss of Mr. Clifton. He like me is astonished at the powers of your brother's mind, and at their perversion; and he fears that this attempt, having failed, will but serve to render that perversion more obdurate, nay perhaps more active. He seems even to dread lest I am not secure; which his desire to guard and caution me against would not suffer him to repress or conceal. His tenderness and ecstasy, and indeed, Louisa, they were both very strong, were mingled with regret equally vivid: and Mr. Clifton! Mr. Clifton! repeatedly burst from him.

Whilst I was relating what had passed between me and Sir Arthur to Frank, and now again since I have been writing it to you, I accused myself of coldness, and of shrinking from, or rather of half delivering the truth, lest Sir Arthur should think me a forward girl, or lest I should think my-

self capable of too sudden a change. But of the degree of that change do you, my friend, judge. I have at all times endeavoured to shew you my naked heart, and often have violently struggled against every disguise. I never concealed from myself that I thought more highly of Frank Henley than of Mr. Clifton; but I imagined principle taught me to prefer what principle now warns me to shun. I am more and more convinced of the error of marrying a bad man in order to make him good. I was not entirely ignorant of this before, and therefore flattered myself the good might be effected previous to marriage. I forgot, when passion has a purpose to obtain, how artful it is in concealment.

I have another quarrel with myself, for having been so desirous of proving to my own conviction that the world's prejudices and the prejudices of my family ought to be respected, while that opinion accorded with my practice; and of being now so equally alert to prove the reverse. Such are the deceptions which the mind puts upon

upon itself! For indeed I have been very desirous of acting with sincerity in both instances. I can only say that I feel more certain at present; for before I had doubts, and now I have none. If you suspect me to be influenced by inclination, tell me so without reserve.

All good be with my friend! May she profit by my mistakes!

A. W. ST. IVES.

LETTER CI.

COKE CLIFTON.

TO

GUY FAIRFAX.

Rose-Bank.

YOU will perceive, Fairfax, I have changed the scene, and am now in the country.

country. I have a long narrative to detail, and am sitting in an old hall with gloom and leisure enough to make it as tedious and as dull as you could wish. My poor mother has taken her last leave of us, and lies now a corpse in the room under me. I could be melancholy, or mad, or I know not what—But 'tis no matter—She brought me here unasked to make the journey of this world, and now I am obliged to jog on. Not that I think I should much care if it were shortened, nor how soon; except that I would live to have my revenge; and that I will have, little troubling myself though the next minute were certain to be my last. It rankles at my heart, and lies there corroding, biting, festering, night and day.

I have quarrelled with my sister, and I am sure shall never forgive her; nor will she forgive me, so that we shall easily balance our accounts. This Anna St. Ives is her supreme favourite. But no wonder—No wonder—It would be strange if she were not! Still to be so ready to give up
a brother,

a brother, and write me such a letter as she did on the death of my mother ! If I do not make her repent it Heaven renounce me !

But I consider the whole world as my enemies at this moment ; you perhaps, Fairfax, excepted. I say perhaps, for I do not know how soon you may turn upon and yelp at me with the rest.

Forgive me, Fairfax. I am all venom, all viper, and cannot forbear to hiss even at my friend. But let my enemies beware ! They shall find I can sting !—These cursed gnawings of heart will not let me begin my story.

I told you I was determined to deny the anonymous letter. I have been very industrious with uncle Fitz-Allen and aunt Wenbourne ; and have been equally careful to titilate the vanity of the coxcomb Edward, who is highly flattered with the attention I have paid him, and will I am certain become my warm partisan.

They

They had all heard the story, but were all ready enough to gape and swallow my tale ; which considering it was wholly invention was not ill composed. I begin to hate myself, to hate her, to hate the whole world, for being obliged to submit to such a damned expedient. But I will not recede. I will have my revenge ! Were the devil himself waiting to devour me I would on ; or were he engaged against me, I would over-reach him !

I concerted my measures, and learning that this lad of mine, who wrote the letter for me, was down at Wenbourne-Hill, I sent my man to inveigle him to come to me, at an inn where I purposely stopped, in my way to Rose-Bank. How durst they suborn my servant ?—But—! I will stab and not curse !

My valet executed his commission, and prevailed on the lad to come ; though with some difficulty, for he is a stubborn dog ; and had not the valet followed my directions, and told him it was to do his old master a service, he would have been foiled.

ed. But I took him up at Paris, destitute and in some danger of starving, which he has not forgotten.

This Henley however is a greater favourite with him than I am ; as I soon found by his discourse.

I began by founding him, to try if it were possible to prevail on him to assert he had written the letter at the instigation of Henley, instead of me ; but I soon found it was in vain, and durst not proceed to let him see my drift.

I then persuaded him that they had totally mistaken my purpose in writing the letter ; that I had done it with a very friendly design ; that I had myself a very great esteem for Henley, and that I meant nothing but good to Anna ; but that there were some reasons, which I could not explain to him, that had occasioned me to write the letter.

As my next purpose, after that of making him an evidence in my favour, was to send him entirely out of the way, if I failed in the first attempt, I began to remind
him

him of the condition in which I had found him in Paris, which he was ready enough to acknowledge, and seemed indeed afraid of acting ungratefully. I prompted and strengthened his fears, and at last told him that, since I found he was a good lad and meant well, though he was mistaken and had done me an injury, I would give him an opportunity of shewing his gratitude.

I then pretended that I had a packet of the utmost consequence to be delivered to my friend in Paris; meaning you, Fairfax; which I durst not trust to any but a sure hand: and as I knew him to be an honest lad, I expected he would not refuse to set off with it immediately. It was an affair almost of life and death! And, that I might impress his mind with ideas which would associate and beget suitable images, I began to talk of the decease of my mother, of my own affliction at the misunderstanding with Anna, of my very great friendship for Henley, and of the fatal consequences that would attend the mis-carriage of the packet.

Still

Still I found him reluctant. He seemed half to suspect me ; and yet I made a very clever tale of it. He talked of Henley and his aunt ; and he had likewise a dread of Paris. His aunt I find has been maintained by Henley, she being lame and disabled ; and as sending him out of the way was a preliminary step absolutely necessary, I gave him a thirty pound bank-note, desired him to go to his aunt and give her ten pounds, and to keep the rest to secure him against any accidents, of which he seemed afraid, in a strange country ; with a promise that he should have as much more, if he performed his commission faithfully, on his return.

I further enquired the direction of the aunt, telling him I would undertake to provide for her : and so I must, for she too must be sent out of the way.

At last, by repeating my professions and again reminding him of my taking him up at Paris, I was successful. Though I had more trouble in gaining the compliance of this lout than would have been sufficient, were

were I prime minister, and did I bribe with any thing like the same comparative liberality, to gain ten worthy members of parliament, though five knights of the shire had been of the number.

He wanted to return to Wenbourne-Hill for his necessaries and trifling property : and this reminded me not only of the danger of doing that but of his passing through London. Accordingly I told him to keep the ten pounds meant for his aunt to buy himself what things he wanted, which I promised to replace to her, and informed him I now recollected that he must take the nearest road to Dover, which I pretended lay through Guildford, Bletchingly, and Tunbridge, leaving London on the left.

The importance, hurry, and command I assumed did not give him time to reflect ; and the injunctions I gave were such as I do not imagine he would have disobeyed. But for my own security, pretending a fear that he might mistake his way, I sent my valet with him ; privately ordering the
valet

valet not to part till he saw him safe on board the packet-boat.

And now, Fairfax, it is not impossible but the wise uncle, who has an excellent scent at discovery and no small opinion of his own acuteness, may find out that Henley himself was the forger of this letter; that it was a collusion between him and the lad, that he has himself removed both the lad and the aunt, and that his charity is a farce. I say such an event is possible.— You may be sure that the idea shall be wholly his own, and that I will allow him all the just praise which he will graciously bestow upon his penetration.

My directions to the lad were to bring the packet immediately to you; which packet you will find to be blank paper, for I had no time for any thing more, except a short note of which the following is a copy.

“ AN event which I have not leisure to
“ relate occasions me to send you this by
“ a special messenger. You will most
“ probably

“ probably receive a letter express from
“ me before he arrives, but if not detain
“ him carefully. Hint not a word of the
“ matter, but make a pretext of urgent
“ business concerning me, for the issue of
“ which he must wait. At all events do
“ not let him escape, till you hear further
“ from

“ C. CLIFTON.”

I was obliged to pretend extreme hurry to the lad, but I gave my valet private instructions to take him round, and use as much delay as he conveniently could.— Meanwhile I will send the letter I am now writing away express, that you may be fully prepared ; for this is a point of infinite consequence. If you are not in Paris the express is to follow you ; and you will be kind enough to take measures that the lad may follow the express. He is ordered to wait your commands, which I told him might possibly detain him a month or even more ; though it might happen

happen that the business would be transacted in a week.

Not that I can hope the real business can now possibly be so soon finished.

You will take care to make your account agree with mine ; and circumstances oblige me to require of you, Fairfax, to condescend to get the lad's favour, and not make his stay irksome. You may command me to ten times this amount, as you know.

This is a melancholy scene, and a gloomy house, and a dismal country ; and I myself am fretful, and moody, and mad, and miserable. I shall soon get into action, and then it will wear off.

I will have her ; ay, by the infernals will I ! And on my own terms. I know she is rejoicing now in her Henley. — Eternal curses bite him ! But I will haunt her ! I will appear to her in her dreams, and her waking hours shall not want a glimpse of me. I know she hates me. So be it ! If she did not I could not so readily digest my vengeance. But I know she does ! And she

she shall have better cause ! I never yet submitted to be thus baffled. She is preparing an imaginary banquet, and I will be there a real guest. I will meet her at Philippi !

I wish I were away from this place ! I wish I were in my mother's coffin !

I hate to meet this insolent sister of mine. We have had a battle, and I was in such a frantic rage that I could neither find ideas nor words ; while she was cool, cutting, insolent, impudent— ! I never in my life had so strong an inclination to wring a hussy's neck round.

But I will get away as fast as I can. I am resolved however to turn her out of the house first. She shall feel me too, before I have done. Brother with her is no tie, nor shall sister be to me. Her mother has made but a small provision for her, and has recommended her to my mercy. She had better have taught her a little humility—

Plagues and pestilence ! Why do I worry myself about her ? I have quite causes

enough of distraction without that. I must not turn her out of doors neither, now I remember. If I did she would fly to her friend, and would make her if possible as great a fury as herself.

Why do I say would make? Do I not know that I am her abhorrence? I loved her, Fairfax, better than ever I loved woman; and would have loved her more, have loved her entirely, infinitely, heart and soul, if she had not wronged me. From the first I was overlooked by her, catechised, reprimanded, treated like a poor ignoramus; while her Henley—! If I write any more I shall go mad!—Dash through the window or do some desperate act!—

C. CLIFTON.

LET-

LETTER CII.

SIR ARTHUR ST. IVES

TO

ABIMELECH HENLEY.

London, Grosvenor-Street.

Mr. HENLEY,

SIR, I have received your letter, which I must acknowledge is far more satisfactory and in a more proper style than your last, at which I cannot but own I was exceedingly surprised.

With respect to your son, I must say that he is a young gentleman of very great merit; and though a marriage into the family of St. Ives is a thing that he certainly

tainly has no right to expect, yet I cannot deny that your proposal deserves some consideration ; inasmuch as you now come forward like a man, and have likewise a recollection of propriety.

Neither do I forget, good sir, what you have hinted concerning Wenbourne-Hill, which is far from disagreeable to me. And though there are many impediments, for which I cannot altogether answer just at present, yet I think it very probable that this affair should end in something like the manner you desire. I accordingly expect, Mr. Henley, you will have the kindness to stop proceedings relative to the foreclosures.

In return for which I assure you, on my honour, I will do every thing that becomes a gentleman to bring the affair to a proper conclusion. And as I have a very great respect for your son, and think very highly of his parts, and learning, and all that, I find when things come to be considered that he perhaps may make my daughter more happy, and the
match

match may have other greater conveniences than perhaps one that might seem to the other branches of my family more suitable.

But I know that for the present it will be opposed by Lord Fitz-Allen ; and though I do not think proper to be governed by him or any man, yet I could rather wish not to come to an open rupture with so near a relation.

It will perhaps be thought derogatory by some other branches of the family.— But my daughter has a very high opinion of the good qualities of your son ; and she reminds me continually that he has done us many signal services, which I assure you, Mr. Henley, I am very willing to remember.

When things shall be in a proper train, I imagine it will be our best way of proceeding to pay off all mortgages on Wenbourne-Hill, together with the sum for the docking of the entail to my son Edward, and to settle the estate in reversion on our children and their issue ; my

rental being made subject to the payment of legal interest to your son for the fifty thousand pounds. But we will consider further on these things when matters are ripe.

In the mean time, be pleased to send me up one thousand pounds for present current expences, which you will place to account. And now I hope, good sir, we shall from this time be upon proper terms : in expectation of which I remain with all friendly intentions,

A. ST. IVES.

LETTER

LETTER CIII.

ANNA WENBOURNE ST. IVES

TO

LOUISA CLIFTON.

London, Grosvenor Street.

OH that I could write to my Louisa as formerly, with flattering and generous hopes in favour of a brother! Would it were possible! I am already weary of accusation, though I fear this is but its beginning. I cannot help it, but I have strong apprehensions. Not that I will be the slave of fear, or sink before danger should it happen to come.

The lad that copied the anonymous letter has left Wenbourne Hill! Is run away!

No one knows whither ! He went the very day on which your brother left London, to be present with you at Mrs. Clifton's funeral ; and Clifton now denies, with pretended indignation, having had any knowledge whatever of this letter !— Oh how audacious is he in error ! Had the same energy but a worthy object, how excellent would be its effects !

It is a strange circumstance ! And what is more strange and indeed alarming, Frank has been to enquire for the lad's aunt, and she is gone ! No one can tell what is become of her, except that she went away in a hackney-coach, after having as the people suppose received a present ; because she discharged all her little debts contracted during the absence of Frank, and bought herself some necessaries.

What can this sudden and unaccountable removal of these two people mean ? They had both apparently the strongest motives to the contrary ; and Frank has a very good opinion of the lad, and not a bad one of the aunt.

This

This is not all. We were yesterday invited to dine with Lord Fitz-Allen ; that is I and Sir Arthur, not Frank Henley, as you will suppose. I had a dislike to the visit, though I did not suspect it would have been half so disagreeable. My brother and my aunt Wenbourne were likewise invited ; we found them there.

Ever since the scene with Mr. Clifton I have been constantly denied to him, and positively refused all his applications for an interview ; conceiving it to be just not to let him imagine there was any doubt on my mind, relative to his proceedings and their motives. We had scarcely sat down to table before he came in, as if by accident. This was a subterfuge. To what will not error and the abandonment of the passions submit ?

After apologies for dropping in and disturbing so much good company, and a repetition of—I am very glad to see you, sir ; you do my table honour, and other like marked compliments from Lord Fitz-Allen, Clifton seated himself and endeavoured

voured to assume his former gaiety and humour. But it could not be—His heart was too ill at ease. His eye was continually glancing toward me, and there as often met that steady regard which he knew not how to support, and by which he was as continually disconcerted. I did not affect to frown, and to smile would have been guilt. I put no reproof into my look, except the open-eyed sobriety of fortitude, springing from a consciousness of right. But this was insupportable. He talked fast, for he wanted to talk away his sensations, as well as to convince his observers that he was quite at his ease. I know not how far he was successful, for they laughed as much when he failed, or more perhaps, than they would have done had his wit preserved its usual brilliancy. His manner told them he intended to be jocular, and that was their cue to join chorus.

Lord Fitz-Allen was very marked in his attentions to him, which were returned with no less ardour. Clifton indeed evidently

dently laid himself out to please the whole table ; but me least, because with me he had least hope ; and because he found his efforts produced no alteration in that uniform seriousness on which I had determined.

As soon as the dessert was served up the servants withdrew, and not one of them afterward came in till rung for ; which I imagine had been preconcerted. Looks then became more grave, and the conversation soon dwindled into silence. At last Lord Fitz-Allen, after various hems and efforts, for he has some fear of me, or rather of what he supposes the derogatory sufferance of contradiction, addressed himself to me.

I am sorry to hear, niece, there is a misunderstanding between you and Mr. Clifton ; and as you happen now to be both together, I think it is a proper opportunity for explanation. You know, Miss St. Ives, that an alliance with the family of Clifton has always met my approbation ; and I suppose you will not deny me the

favour of listening with patience—Why don't you speak, niece?

You desired me to listen, sir, and I am silent—Let Mr. Clifton proceed.

Clifton after some stammering hesitation began—I know, madam, you have been prejudiced against me, and have been told very strange things; very unaccountable things. I cannot tell what answer to make, till I know perfectly of what I am accused. All I request is to be suffered to face my accusers, and let Lord Fitz-Allen, or Sir Arthur, or this good lady [my aunt Wenbourne] or your brother, nay or yourself, though you think so ill of me, be my judge. I am told something of an anonymous letter; I know not very well what; but if any good evidence can be brought of my having written, or caused to be written, or had any concern whatever in the writing of such a letter, I solemnly pledge myself to renounce the blessing I so ardently seek without a murmur.

Lord

Lord Fitz-Allen exclaimed nothing could be more gentleman-like. My aunt Wenbourne owned it was a very proper proposal. Edward thought there could be no objection to it. Sir Arthur was silent.

His insidious appeal to justice, and being brought face to face with his accusers, revived the full picture of the flight of the lad, the removal of the aunt, and the whole chain of craft and falsehood connected with these circumstances. It was with difficulty I repressed feelings that were struggling into indignation—I addressed myself to Mr. Clifton.

Then, sir, you coolly and deliberately deny all knowledge of the letter in question?

I have told you, madam, that I will suffer Lord Fitz-Allen, yourself, any person to pass sentence, after having examined witnesses.

Answer me in an open direct manner, Mr. Clifton, without ambiguity. Were you not the author of that letter?

I am

I am sorry, madam, to see you so desirous to find me guilty; and I would even criminate myself to give you pleasure, but that I know I must then neither hope for your favour nor the countenance of this good company. I assure you, Lord Fitz-Allen, I assure you, Sir Arthur, and you, madam, and all, upon my honour I am incapable of what is attributed to me.

Do not appeal to my uncle and aunt, Mr. Clifton, but turn this way. Let your eyes be fixed here. Listen while I read the letter; and then, without once shrinking from yourself, or me, repeat as you have done, though in an equivocal manner, upon your honour you are not the author.

I took the letter from my pocket, and began to read. When I came to the following passage, I again repeated—Look at me, Mr. Clifton—“ She will never have the man they mean for her, I can assure you of that; and what is more, he will never have her.” I proceeded to the end, and then added—Once more, Mr. Clifton,

Clifton, look at me and repeat—Upon my honour I was not the inventor and author of those words.

Louisa!—He did look—! I hope I never shall see man look so again!—He stared and forced his eyes to do their office, and repeated—“ Upon my honour I was not “ the inventor and author of those words.” —He stabbed me to the heart, Louisa!—Can he do this?—Then what can he not do? He even felt a complacency at the victory he had obtained, and turning round to Lord Fitz-Allen and the company again repeated—“ Upon my honour I am not “ the inventor and author of those words.”

Lord Fitz-Allen almost crowed with exultation. I am mistaken, niece, said he, if you do not find there are other people who can write anonymous letters: people of no honour; upstarts, mongrels, mushrooms, low contemptible fellows, that would fully the mouth of a Fitz-Allen to mention.

The tone of this lordly uncle was so high, Louisa, and his passions so arrogant, loud,

loud, and obstinate, that it was with difficulty I could recover the fortitude requisite to assert truth and put falsehood to the blush. I again turned to my opponent.

Mr. Clifton, I feel at present you are a dangerous man. But I do not fear you. Observe, sir, I do not fear you—[I turned to my uncle] Sir, Mr. Clifton caused this letter to be written. But, if there were no such letter in existence, I have another proof, stronger, more undeniable, of which I imagine you will not doubt when I inform you that no third person was concerned. It was addressed to myself. It was a strenuous, bold, unprincipled effort to seduce me. Let the gentleman again look me in the face, and tell me I am guilty of falsehood.

I spoke with firmness, and Lord Fitz-Allen's features relaxed, and his eye began to enquire with pain and apprehension. His great fear was of being convicted of want of penetration. Clifton perceived the feelings of the company turn upon him with suspicion; but his art, must I add? his hypocrisy did not fail him.

He

He transformed the confusion he felt into a look of contrition, and with as much ardour as if it had been real replied—

It is that fatal error which has ruined me, madam, in your good opinion, and has occasioned you to credit every accusation against me, however improbable. I confess my guilt. Not guilt of heart, madam; for honour be my witness, my views were as pure as the words in which they were uttered. I was at that time dependant on the will of a mother, whom I loved, and whose memory I revere. My passions were impatient, and I wished to remove impediments to my happiness which now no longer exist. I do not pretend to palliate what is unpardonable, and what I myself condemn as severely as you do; except that I abjure all dishonourable intentions, and meant as I said to be your husband. The strongest proof I can give that this was my meaning I now offer, in the presence of this noble and good company. I require no conditions, I ask for no fortune except yourself, which is the only

only blessing I covet in this life. I will joyfully attend you to the altar whenever you and your worthy relations shall consent; next week, to-morrow, to-day, this moment; and should think myself the most favoured, the most happy man on earth!

The offer is the offer of a gentleman, Sir Arthur, said Lord Fitz-Allen. If Mr. Clifton had been guilty of any indecorum, niece, [Turning to me] you could not require more honourable amends. This is acting with that dignity which characterizes a man of family, Mrs. Wenbourne; and as it is impossible for Miss St. Ives to see it in any other point of view, here the affair will naturally end, and there is no more to be said.

I immediately answered—If, sir, by the affair ending here, you understand any further intercourse between me and Mr. Clifton, I must not suffer you to continue in such an error. We are and ever must remain separate. Habit and education have made us two such different beings,
that

that it would be the excess of folly to suppose marriage could make us one.

Miss St. Ives—[My uncle collected all his ideas of rank and grandeur] Miss St. Ives, you must do me the honour to consider me as the head of our family, and suffer me to remind you of the respect and obedience which are due to that head. The proposal now made you I approve. It is made by a man of family, and I must take the liberty to lay my injunctions upon you to listen to it in a decorous and proper manner.

I answered—I am sorry, sir, that our ideas of propriety are so very opposite. But whether my judgment be right or wrong, as I am the person to be married to Mr. Clifton, and not your Lordship, my judgment as well as yours must and ought to be consulted.

Lord Fitz-Allen could scarcely restrain his anger within the bounds of his own decorum. He burst into exclamations—Exceedingly well, miss!—Very proper proper behaviour to a person of my rank;
and

and your uncle !—You hear, Sir Arthur !—You hear, Mrs. Wenbourne !—You all hear !—But your motives and inclinations are known, miss : I am sorry that it would dishonour the tongue of Fitz-Allen to repeat them : and I cannot help telling you, Sir Arthur, that you have been exceedingly to blame to admit such a fellow to any familiarity with a woman of rank and my niece ; a fellow better entitled to be her footman than her—I will not permit the word to pass my lips.

I felt the cowardice of suffering worth and virtue to be insulted, without a defender, from the fear that I myself should be involved in the insult, and replied—

The gentleman, sir, to whom you have twice alluded in terms of so much contempt, were he present would smile at your mistake. But there are more people at this table than myself who have been witnesses how little he deserves to be spoken of in the language of opprobrium.

Mr. Clifton appeared eager to be the first to acknowledge Mr. Henley was a
very

very worthy person. Edward muttered something to the same tune ; and Sir Arthur seemed very willing to have spoken out, but wanted the courage. He began at Turnham Green, but could get no further. Lord Fitz-Allen answered—

What tell you me of Turnham-Green, Sir Arthur? I was stopped once myself by a highwayman, and my footman fired at him, and sent him packing ; but I did not for that reason come home and marry my footman to my daughter.

The full image of Frank and his virtues pervaded my mind, my heart swelled, my thoughts burst from my lips, and I exclaimed—Oh, sir, that you had a thousand daughters, and that each of them were worthy of such a footman for a husband !

Had you beheld this uncle of mine, Louisa !—The daughters of the peer Fitz-Allen married to footmen ! The insult was almost agony. The only antidote to the pain which his countenance excited was the absurdity and ridicule of the prejudice. But I perceived how vain it was to expect
that.

that in this company the voice of justice should be heard, and I rose. My aunt rose at the same time, to retire with me ; but, recollecting myself, I turned and thus addressed Lord Fitz-Allen and Mr. Clifton, alternately :

That I may not be liable to any just blame from your lordship, or you, sir, for want of being explicit, you must permit me to repeat—I never will again admit of the addresses of Mr. Clifton. I have an abhorrence of the errors in which he is now indulging. He himself has told me what a mad and vicious act it would be to marry a husband in whom I could not confide, and I never can confide in him. My persuasion at this moment of his hypocrisy is such that, could I prevail on myself to the debasement of putting him to the trial, by pretending to accept his hand, I am convinced he would refuse. I read his heart. He seeks an opportunity to revenge imaginary injuries ; for I never did, do not, nor ever can with him any thing but good. I think I would lay down my
life,

life, without hesitation, to render him all of which his uncommon powers are capable : but I perceive the impossibility of its being effected by me, and I here ultimately and determinedly renounce all thought of him, or of so dangerous an attempt.

Mr. Clifton eagerly started up, and with a momentary softening of countenance, a pleading voice, and something like the tone of returning virtue exclaimed—Hear me, madam !—I conjure you, hear me ! My appeal is to the benevolence, the dignity of your heart ! Remember the virtuous plan you had formed— !

The combat in his mind was violent but short. Truth made a struggle to gain the mastery, and hope raised up a transient prospect of success, which was as quickly overclouded by anger and despair, and he stopped abruptly. At least his voice and features were so impassioned that, if these were not his sensations, I have no clue to the human heart. Perceiving him pause and doubt, I replied—

It

It cannot be, Mr. Clifton! You this moment feel it cannot! You have begun a course of fraud, and which the whole arrangement of to-day is only meant as so much pitiful machinery to effect. You are conscious, Mr. Clifton, you are conscious, Lord Fitz-Allen, that our meeting was not, as you have both pretended, accidental. And I here call upon you—you, Mr. Clifton, to tell for what purpose or where you have sent the lad who wrote the letter, and to what place you have removed his aunt? Such an artifice is vile, sir! And to challenge your accusers to stand forward, and with a look such as you assumed to affirm, "Upon your honour you were not the inventor and author of the letter," is so much more vile that I shudder for you! Your own proceedings have conjured up a train of recollections that speak a concerted plan of perfidy. You mean mischief! But I once more tell you, sir, I do not fear you! I will not fear you! My fears indeed are strong, but they are for yourself. Beware!

The

The more guilt you have committed, the more you will be driven to commit. Turn back! You are in a dreadful path! It is unworthy of you, Mr. Clifton! It is unworthy of you!

I instantly withdrew, and was followed by Mrs. Wenbourne, who began to express something like blame of the positive manner in which I had spoken, and the high language I had used to Lord Fitz-Allen; but it was too feeble to incite an answer in my then state of mind. I requested she would order her carriage, and set me down. She asked if I would not first pay my respects to my uncle. I answered yes, when my uncle should be more deserving of respect. She said I was a strange young lady. I replied I sincerely hoped there were many young ladies stranger even than I.

She took offence at these retorts upon her words, and I perceived that, though the spirit of my answer was right, the manner was wrong: and explained and apologised as became me. She was ap-

peased, and when the carriage came, again asked if I would not go with her to take leave. I answered, I imagined my uncle would be glad to wave the ceremony; and, as I thought he had acted very improperly, curtsying and taking leave would but be practising the customary hypocrisy of our manners, which I hoped I should on all occasions have the firmness to oppose.

Accordingly my aunt went herself; and his lordship, still preserving his dignity, pretended to forbid me his presence, till I better understood what was due to the relationship and rank in which he stood.— This my aunt reported, and I returned no answer, but left her to make her own reflections.

Thus ended this painful interview—
Tell me, what ought I to think? What can be the purport of a conduct so very wrong? Such a string of falsehoods! How different would the behaviour of Mr. Clifton have been, had not conscious criminality oppressed and chained up his faculties! Such persistence in duplicity must have

have some end in view. Could I consent to marriage, which is now utterly impossible, he has certainly no such meaning.— If he had he could not have written, he could not have acted as he has done; and even less in this last instance since his writing than before, for he could not but know that, though he could appear this generous man of honour to Lord Fitz-Allen, he must stand detected by me.— It was not possible he should suppose otherwise.

Well! Let him mean me all the harm he pleases; only let me find some opportunity of convincing him what a depraved, unmanly, trivial turn his mind has taken, and let me but give it a different bent, and I will willingly suffer all he shall have the power to inflict. I do not find myself, Louisa, disposed to stand in that dread of baseness and violence which they generally inspire. Virtue is not a passive but an active quality; and its fortitude is much more potent than the rash vehemence of vice.

Adieu, dear Louisa. Peace and felicity guard you!

A. W. ST. IVES.

LETTER CIV.

COKE CLIFTON

TO

GUY FAIRFAX.

London, Dover-Street.

THANK you, Fairfax, for your speed and precautions, which I must request you not to slacken. Do not let the lad escape you: his appearance here would be ruin. Let but my grand scheme be completed,
and

and then I care not though the legions of hell were to rise, and mow and run a tilt at me. I would face their whole fury.—The scene would delight me. Let them come all! I burn to turn upon and rend them! The more desperate the more grateful.

I told you, Fairfax, she hated me! I have it now from her own mouth! She feels I am become her foe! My hand is already upon her! My deepest darkest thoughts of vengeance do not exceed her imagination.

And yet she fears me not! Her words, her looks, her gestures are all cool, firm defiance! She is a miracle, Fairfax; A miracle! But I will overmatch her. A heroine! She would have unhorsed Orlando himself, had she lived in the times of the knights Paladin.

I am an insufferable booby, an eternal lunatic, for having first thought of quarrelling with her. But it is too late! I might have foreseen the advantages I give a woman like her. She openly, magnani-

moussly tells me what my intents are, and then spurns at them. She keeps her anger under indeed, but does not repress its energy; a proof of the subjection in which she holds her passions. She once endeavoured to teach me this art, would I but have listened. But that is past!

I could not have thought it was in woman! The poor, wailing, watery-eyed beings I had before encountered would not suffer me to suppose a female could possess the high courage of the daring, noble mind. Never but one short moment did I overtop her: nor are there any means but those I then used. Inspire her with the dread of offending what she thinks principle, and she becomes a coward!

But I will rouse! I will soar above her, will subdue her, will have her prostrate in humble submission, or perish! In the presence of witnesses I feel I cannot succeed; but singly, face to face, passion to passion, and being to being, distinct and eminent as she stands above all woman-kind,

kind, I will yet prove to her she is not the equal of the man Clifton.

She herself has even thrown the gauntlet. I have had such a scene with her! A public exhibition! I cannot relate the manner of it. I dare not trust my brain with the full reminiscence.

Why did I quarrel with her? She meant me well—Tortures!—I am a lunatic to tease myself with such recollections. This is a damned, wrong-headed, ignorant, blundering, vile world; and I cannot see my way in it. I should have had no suspicion that it is all this but for her.

That Henley shall never have her!—I'll murder him first! Though the bottomless pit were to gape and swallow me, he shall not have her! The contemptible buzzard, Sir Arthur, is now completely veered about but in vain! It shall not be! By hell it shall not!

This fellow, this Henley must some how or other be disposed of. The contempt of the arrogant peer, her uncle, will harm

him but little ; for the lord, with all his dignity, is no match for the plebeian.

Neither will his lordship hastily seek another combat with his niece. The only advantage I have, in so insignificant an ally, is that of hereafter making suspicion alight on Henley, and not on me ; for I mean to carry them both off, Henley and Anna. I know not where or how I shall yet dispose of them, but there is no other mode of accomplishing vengeance. They must be confined too. I care not how desperate the means ! I will not retract ! They shall be taught the danger of raising up an enemy like me ! I will have them at my feet ! Will separate them ! Will glut my revenge, and do the deed that shall prevent their ever meeting more, except perhaps to reproach each other with the madness of having injured, aggravated, and defied a Clifton !

My whole days are dedicated to this single object. I have been riding round the skirts of this shapeless monster of a city,
on

on all sides, in search of lonely tenantless houses ; some two of which I mean to provide with inhabitants. I have met with more than one that are not ill situated.

But I want agents ! Desperados ! Hungry and old traders in violence ! I care not where I go for them ; have them I will, though I seek them in the purlieus of infamy and detestation. To succeed by any other means is impossible. She will not admit me in the same apartment with herself, nor I believe in the same world, had she the power to exclude me.

I met her indeed at Lord Fitz-Allen's, where the scene above-mentioned passed ; but it was a plan concerted with his lordship, which she easily detected, and publicly reproached him with his duplicity. I gloried to her hear ; for she had not injured him. A poor compound of pride and selfishness ! Incapable of understanding the worth of such a niece ! But she made him feel his own insignificance.

Henley and she are now never asunder.

I have

I have mentioned the maid Laura to you. She tells me they have long conversations in the morning, long walks in the afternoon, and at night they have neither of them the power to rise and separate. But I will come upon them ! My spirit at present is haunting them, never leaves them, girds at and terrifies them at every instant, during their amorous dalliance ! I know it does ! They cannot get quit of me ! I am with them, weighing them down, convulsing them ! They feel they are in my gripe !—Hah ! The thought is heart's ease.

When there is no company, and when Sir Arthur is not sitting with them, this maid, Laura, has that honour. Whence it appears that even these immaculate souls have some dread of scandal.

And who is it inspires that dread ? It is I ! They seem to have discovered that all circumstances, all incidents wear a double face ; and that I am the malignant genius who can make which he pleases the true one—Yes ! I am with them ! I send the Incubus that hag-rides them in
their

their dreams! They gasp and would awake, but cannot!

Why could she not have bestowed all this affection upon me? Why could she not? I once thought a woman might have loved me!—But it seems I was mistaken—The things that go by the general name of woman might; but when I came to woman herself, she could not, though she tried.

Would I were any where but in this infernal gloom! It is a detestable country! This town is one everlasting fog, and its inhabitants are as cloudy as its skies!—Every man broods over some solitary scheme of his own, avoids human intercourse, and hates to communicate the murk of his mind. I am in a wilderness. I fly the herd, and the herd flies me. We pass and scowl enmity at each other, for I begin to look with abhorrence on the face of man. There is not a single gleam of cheerfulness around me. The sun has not once shone since the day of my disappointment, which was itself thick darkness.

Would

Would I could get rid of myself !——I am going to take a ride, and make a second examination of a large lonely house beyond Knightsbridge. It lies to the left, and is at a sufficient distance from the road. I think it will suit my purpose. I must not have far to convey them ; and Laura informs me their walks are most frequently directed through Hyde-Park, and among the fields at the back of Brompton.

I must be as quiet and appear as little myself as possible ; for which reason I ride without a servant. And though I have been industrious in reading advertisements, and getting intelligence of empty houses, I have not ventured to enquire personally. Laura attends them in their walks ; but she is secure.

They must both be seized at the same time, and in a manner that shall frustrate all research. It will then be concluded they have gone off together. He is a powerful fellow, a dangerous fellow, and I must be well provided. He shall never have

have her, Fairfax! I would die upon the wheel, hang like a negro, and parch alive in the sun ere he should have her!

C. CLIFTON.

P. S. All society is become odious to me, but chiefly that society which I am obliged to frequent. This uncle Fitz-Allen, aunt Wenbourne, and brother Edward are three such poor beings, and the censures they pass on a woman who is of an order so much above them are so vapid, so selfish, or so absurd, that it is nauseating to sit and listen to them. Yet these are the animals I am obliged to court! Hypocrisy is a damned trade, Fairfax; and I will have full vengeance for having been forced upon such a practice. The only present relief I have is to make the arrogant peer foam with the idea of his relationship to a gardener's son. This would be an exquisite pleasure, but that it is millions of times more maddening to me than to him.

LETTER

LETTER CV.

ANNA WENBOURNE ST. IVES

TO

LOUISA CLIFTON.

London, Grosvenor-Street.

ABIMELECH is come up to town. I am obliged very respectfully to call him Mr. Henley when Sir Arthur hears me, in compliance to his feelings: and he has hinted that hereafter, when his name is written, it must be tagged with an esquire.

The old miser [Well, Louisa, let it be the old gentleman] is so eager in pursuit of his project that he can take no rest, and

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is unwilling Sir Arthur should take any.— He has a prodigious quantity of cunning! Whatever he may know of the theory of the passions as a general subject, no person certainly knows better how to work upon the passions of Sir Arthur: at least no person who will condescend to take such an advantage. His discourse is such a continued mixture of Wenbourne-Hill, his money, mortgages, grottos, groves, the wherewithals, and the young gentleman his son, that laughter scarcely can hold to hear him. Were the thing practicable, he would render Frank Henley himself ridiculous.

It is pleasant to remark what a check the presence of this favourite son is upon his loquacity. He never suspects the possibility of there being a mortal superior to himself at other times; whereas he has then a latent consciousness of his own ridicule. The effect which the absence of Frank has produced, with the favour he is in with me, and the resolute manner in which he conquered his father when he
last

last went down to Wenbourne-Hill, have made a total change in the old man's behaviour to this formerly neglected but now half adored son. Were habits so inveterate capable of being eradicated, Frank would yet teach him virtue : but the task is too difficult.

He is certainly in a most delicious trance. His son to be married to the daughter of his master ! That master a baronet ! And the estates of that baronet to be his own, as he supposes, to all eternity. For the avaricious dreams of selfishness are satisfied with nothing less. These are joys that swell and enlarge even his narrow heart into something that endeavours to mimic urbanity.

Whenever Sir Arthur mentions Lord Fitz-Allen, or the family consent, honest Aby in a moment conjures up Wenbourne-Hill, a hermitage, and a wilderness ; and for the first day, if he found that dose not strong enough to produce its effect, foreclosures were added to the mixture.—
Your own heart, Louisa, will tell you
what

what Frank's feelings were at such a mean menace ; and, though to stop his garrulity entirely was not in the power of man, he determined to silence him on that subject. But the cunning Abimelech turned even this incident to advantage, by taking care to inform Sir Arthur of Frank's generosity.

Thus, Louisa, things are at present in a train which some months ago I should indeed very little have expected. But such are the energies of virtue ! How changed at present do all surrounding objects seem ! To me they were never dark ; but they were not always pleasant. They are now all cheerfulness and perspicacity. We have the most charming walks and the most delightful conversations, Louisa ; and on subjects so expansive, so sublime— ! Often do I say—“ Why is my friend not “ with us ? Why does she not come and “ bear her part in discussion ? She whose “ mind is so penetrating and whose “ thoughts are so grand.” But we shall meet ! Days and years of happiness are
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before us ! The prospect is rapture !——
Yes, Louisa, we shall meet, and I hope
quickly !

A. W. ST. IVES.

END OF VOL. IV.

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